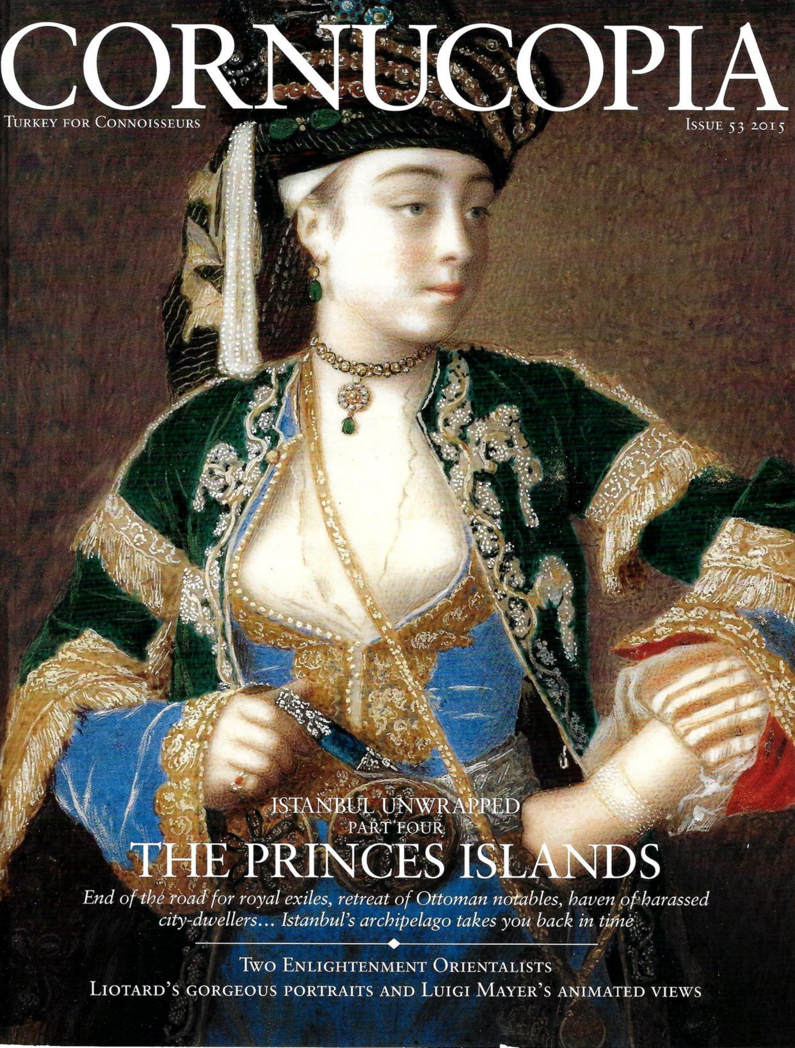

CORNUCOPIA
TURKEY FOR CONNOISSEURS
ISSUE 53 2015

ISTANBUL UNWRAPPED
PART FOUR

THE PRINCES ISLANDS

End of the road for royal exiles, retreat of Ottoman notables, haven of harassed city-dwellers… Istanbul's archipelago takes you back in time

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Ten years of surprises

This year Pera Museum, Istanbul is celebrating its 10th anniversary

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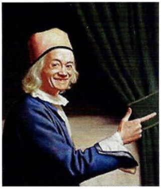
CONNOISSEUR

London's luminous Liotards, prayers on a shirt, bare truths in Beyoğlu, and a Biennial all at sea... Plus three lost Anatolian empires and their tireless champions

EASTERN NUANCE

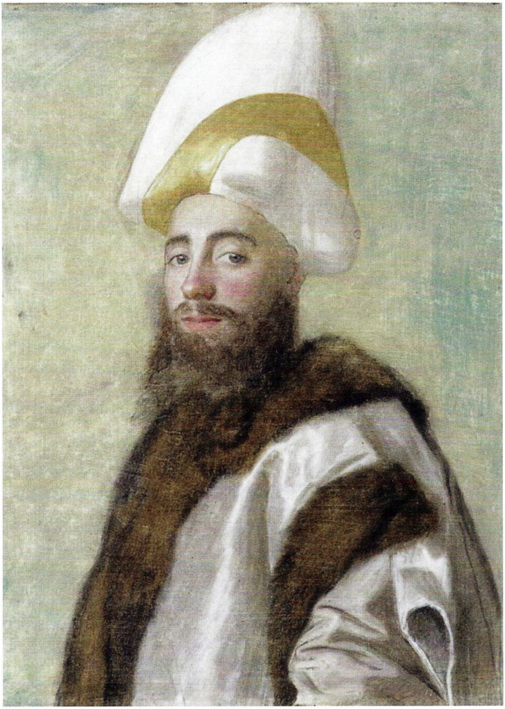
The first Orientalist, Liotard was also the most truthful and subtle. Tim Cornwell marvels at his work on show in London

The 18th-century Swiss portrait artist Jean-Étienne Liotard (1702–1789) is widely regarded as the first Orientalist. The four years he spent in Turkey from 1738, drawing and painting Western merchants and diplomats as well as Ottoman citizens, made him the first serious European artist to find his subject matter in the East. His portrait of a grand vizier,

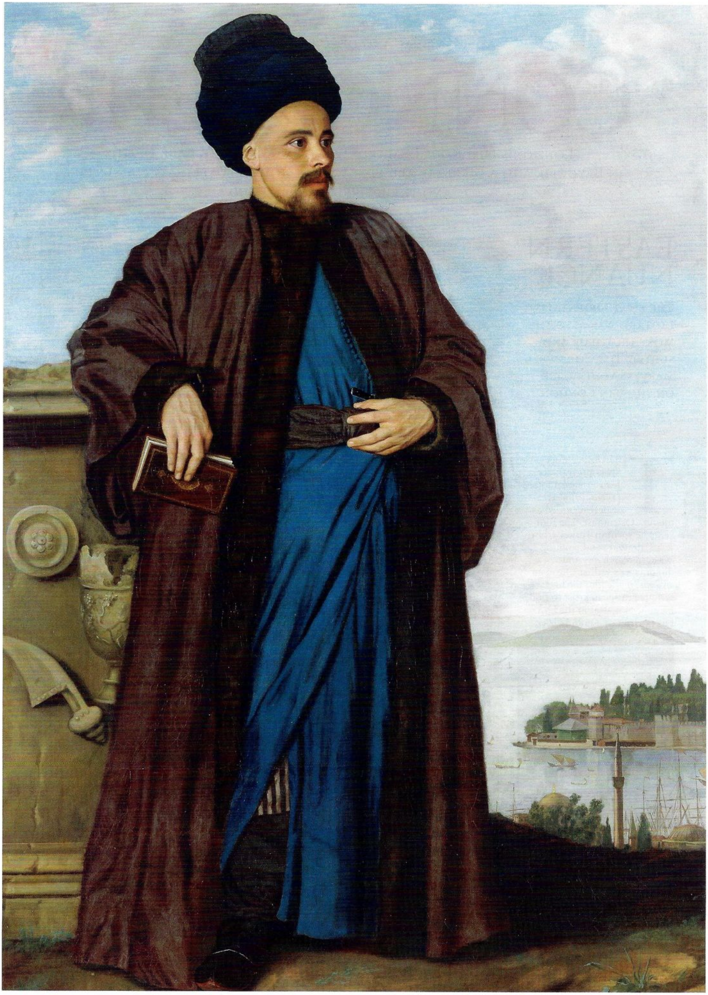


MUSÉE D'ART ET D'HISTOIRE, GENEVA/BETTINA JACOT-DESCOMBES

Right The subject of this likeness in pastels is probably Hekimoğlu Ali Pasha, grand vizier in 1742
Above The artist attracted prominent clients with self-portraits, such as this one of him laughing (c1770)



NATIONAL GALLERY, LONDON



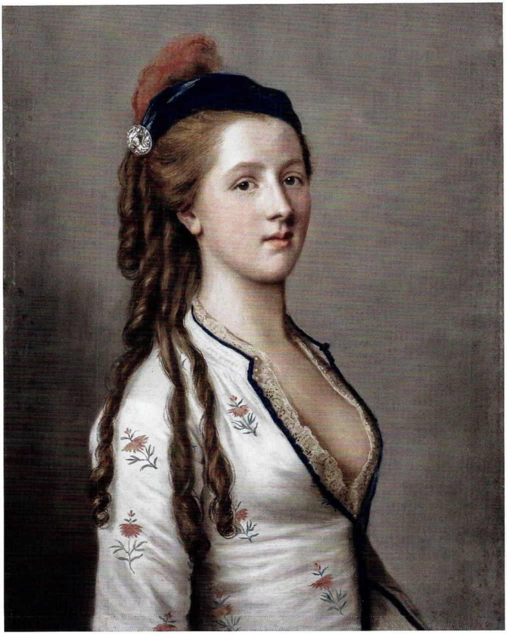
MUSÉE D'ART ET D'HISTOIRE, GENEVA/BETTINA JACOT-DESCOMBES now thought to be Hekimoğlu Ali Pasha (1689–1758), a son of the sultan's Venetian doctor, is in the collection of the National Gallery in London. Other courtly subjects included Augusta, the Dowager Princess of Wales, her late husband, Frederick, and their children; Bonnie Prince Charlie, who would later lay claim to the British throne; and the families of the Habsburg Empress Maria Theresa and King Louis XV of France.

On his return to Europe, Liotard was quick to cash in on Eastern exoticism. Dubbing himself *"le Peintre Turc"*, he dressed in Ottoman costume, with a waist-length beard, creating a flamboyant public persona to build up his clientele.

Liotard's fame has long receded, mainly because his works were often in delicate pastels, portraits designed to hang in private family quarters rather than grand settings. But two major exhibitions this year were designed to redress the balance: the first was at the Scottish National Gallery in Edinburgh. It can now be seen, in much-expanded form, at the Royal Academy. The exhibitions' aim has been "to reintroduce an artist who was very distinguished in the 18th century and had an international career, but has been seemingly forgotten, to a wide audience", says the curator MaryAnne Stevens – something of a legend herself for staging 70 shows at the Royal Academy in a storied 32-year career.

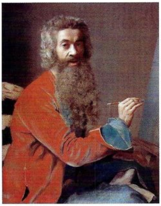
For the nosy art historian, there are two curiosities. The first has been the conservation challenge of transporting more than 40 fragile pastel works, loaned from across Europe. (Two pastel works offered from Qatar's Orientalist Museum collection, and others in the US, were ruled out mostly because of a "no-fly" rule.) Second, the exhibition has revived the question of what work may have been lost – and why – from Liotard's four years in Ottoman lands, mostly in Constantinople.

Edinburgh's Liotard show, which opened in July in just three rooms on the lower floor



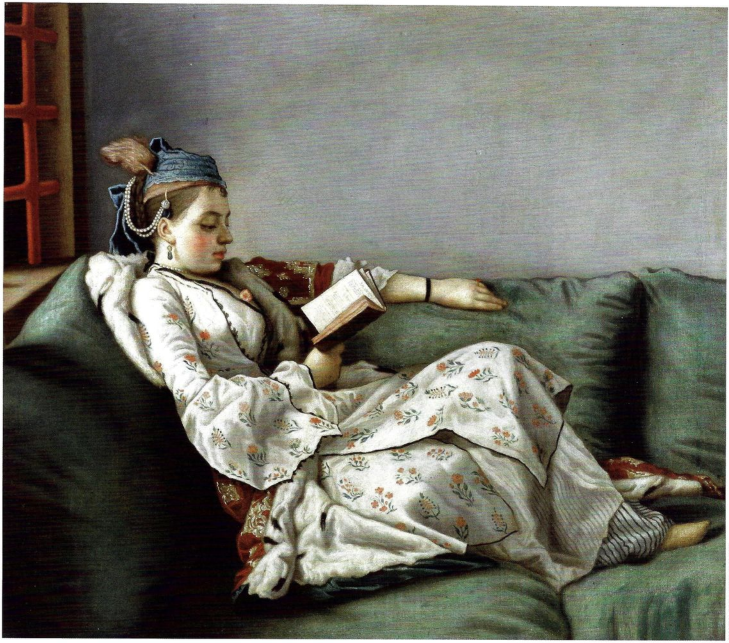
DEVONSHIRE COLLECTION / CHATSWORTH SETTLEMENT TRUSTEES

Opposite Richard Pococke (1704–65), archaeologist, tireless traveller, occasional prelate, wrote an account of his four years in the Ottoman Empire in 'A Description of the East and Some Other Countries'. Liotard met him in Pera in June 1740, and the next month they spent several days on the Princes Islands, visible in the background in this oil portrait. Pococke wears a 'blew linnen' garment under 'a coarse great coat, as the common people here wear'



MUSÉE D'ART ET D'HISTOIRE, GENEVA/BETTINA JACOT-DESCOMBES

Above Lady Anne Somerset, eldest daughter of the Duke of Beaufort, 1755, painted in pastel on vellum. Aged 14, she is dressed in an 'entarî', one of the many costumes Liotard brought back from his time in the Ottoman Empire. Her future husband, Charles Compton, Earl of Northampton, was ambassador to Venice. She was only 22 when they both died in Naples of consumption
Left Another self-portrait, 1751–52, with exotic beard



GALLERIA DEGLI UFFIZI, FLORENCE

of the Scottish National Gallery, felt slightly truncated, but was impressive nonetheless. Facing the visitor down a line of rooms was an imposing oil portrait of the English traveller and pioneering archaeologist Richard Pococke, life-size or a little larger, painted when Liotard had been in Constantinople about a year. Liotard travelled with Pococke to Büyükada, one of the Princes Islands, and painted him against a backdrop of Sultanahmet and the islands in Turkish garb of "blew linnen" lined with fur, bought in Izmir.

Though Liotard did work in hardier oils, he is most famous for his pastels. The portraits are extraordinarily lifelike, but have a great stillness to them. Sitters are as if caught unawares, but frozen and with no impression of movement. Their poses are varied, but their complexions are uniformly satiny and rosy. They seem pleasant, never threatening, dainty rather than dangerous. The women wear, at most, the faintest introspective smiles; the men more forthright expressions, though never overdone. And the objects around them are reproduced in painstaking detail: the fuzz of a perfect peach in a fruit bowl, the gloss of polished wood.

Liotard was born in Geneva in 1702 – just 19 years after a European coalition defeated the feared Ottomans at the gates of Vienna – and died in 1789, the year of the French Revolution. A cosmopolitan European of his era, he trained partly in Paris and worked there, as well as in Rome, London, Constantinople, Vienna, Frankfurt and Lyon. His Eastern travels played to a new and burgeoning fascination with the Orient and *turquerie*.

Other highlights include a portrait of Lady Anne Somerset in a dress teasingly cut *à la turque*, probably part of the artist's own stock from Constantinople; the self-portraits, bizarre, striking images with his long beard and often a Turkish cap; and his daughter Marie-Anne, holding her doll and perhaps commanding silence with an admonishing finger, an expression of a father's adoration for his little angel.

Liotard arrived in Smyrna (modern Izmir) from Lesbos in

Above Princess Marie-Adélaïde, a daughter of Louis XV (1748–52), painted in Paris wearing the same 'entari' as Lady Anne Somerset. The book is open at the word 'Virtue'
Opposite, top right One of Liotard's tasks was to record costumes of the Levant. He did so in numerous standing figures, such as 'A Woman of Constantinople', which conjure up the patterns of fabrics with a 'brilliant fusion of chalks'
Centre Sir Edward Fawkener, 1738–40. The Levantine cloth merchant became ambassador in 1735 and introduced Liotard to Pera society
Bottom Turkish musicians play Western violins, 1740–42

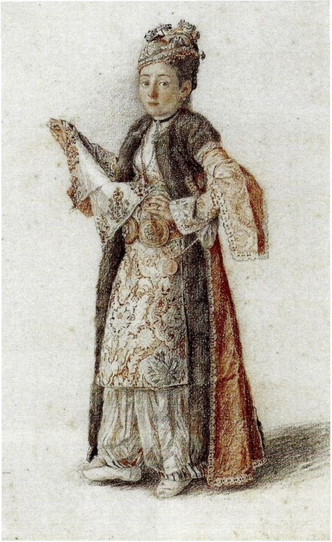
May 1738, accompanying two English aristocrats he had met in Rome, and after a few weeks moved on to Constantinople and Pera. He painted European diplomats and merchants and their families in Ottoman finery, as well as Turkish men and women, whom he observed with a cool-headed domestic intimacy far removed from the tawdry Orientalist fantasies of the Victorians a century later. He found local colour in lighter sketches of Turkish musicians and "The Dwarf Ibrahim".

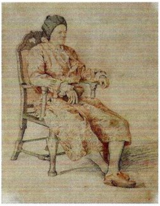
No Ottoman portraits were on show in Edinburgh, but London visitors can enjoy them. Works include Sir Everard Fawkener, British ambassador to the Sublime Porte, dressed in Oriental robe, slippers and a local hat. And there is Laura Tarsi, a "Grecian lady" from the artist's circle in Constantinople, in a bright blue kaftan, vivid green and gold jacket, and an *uçkur* belt with circular plaques, all rendered in perfect miniature in watercolour on ivory.

Nicholas Tromans, a curator who has written on the Orientalists, notes how in the days before steamship travel Liotard lived shoulder-to-shoulder with the daily polyglot life of Constantinople, earning his living there. Unlike the Victorian tourist painters who would follow, he never planted his own fantasies and prejudices on what he saw.

"He is the first European artist to spend a lot of time in the East, in the Ottoman Empire, who produced a lot of very high-quality works which survive," says Tromans. While military or diplomatic travellers may have produced earlier sketches, "as an artist producing top-quality works that survive, then Liotard is the first".

An accompanying book sets out to re-establish Liotard's reputation with a series of essays exploring new scholarship on the artist. It is one of the five authors, Marc Fehlmann, who questions how it is that, although Liotard spent more than four years in the Ottoman Empire, and ten and a half months in the Ottoman vassal state of Moldavia, "only a small body of works – not more than 80 including prints after lost drawings – appears to have survived from this period of his career".


RMN-GRAND PALAIS (MUSÉE DU LOUVRE) / THIERRY LE MAGE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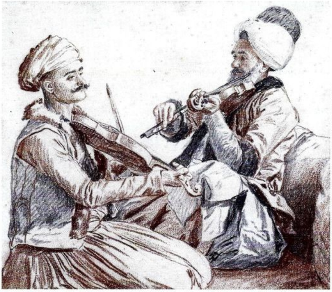
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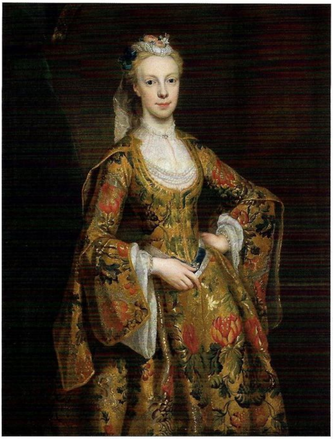
The hard-working Liotard might have produced twice this volume of work. "There really is a question: did he lose half a portfolio on the way back from Constantinople? We just don't know," says MaryAnne Stevens. "He was certainly pretty prolific, and I'm sure he was making notes and studies throughout the entire four years he was there, and probably receiving quite a substantial number of commissions. Again, not many have survived."

What is probably Liotard's best-known work, *La Chocolatière*, held in Dresden, was described as a "Holbein in pastel". But though his most famous works are pastels, he is also regarded as a great draughtsman, oil painter, printmaker, miniaturist and enamellist.

The two Englishmen Liotard had travelled to Turkey with on their Grand Tour were John Montagu, the 4th Earl of Sandwich, and the Hon William Ponsonby, Viscount Duncannon, an Anglo-Irish peer who would become one of his greatest patrons, owning 72 works. They enlisted him "to draw the dresses of every country they should go into; to take prospects of all the remarkable places which had made a figure in history; and to preserve in their memories, by the help of painting, those noble remains of antiquity which they went in quest of".



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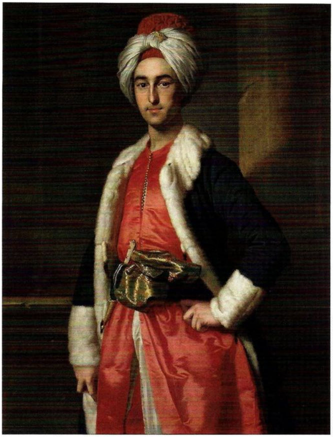

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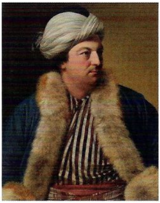


KUNSTMUSEUM, BERN

Top right William Ponsonby, Viscount Duncannon, 1738, one of the two aristocrats who took Liotard to Istanbul Top left Ponsonby's wife, Lady Caroline Cavendish, c1739–40 Above Simon Luttrell of Luttrellstown, 1753–54. A founder of the Dublin Hellfire Club and another of Liotard's Irish patrons, he is depicted in borrowed clothes

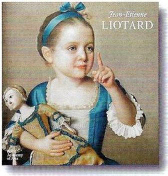
Setting up shop in London on his return, with his long beard, exotic hats and Eastern dress, Liotard used self-portraits to promote an exuberant image that helped distinguish him from competitors plying the portrait trade. The English art historian Horace Walpole noted that "from having lived at Constantinople, he wears a Turkish habit and a beard down to his girdle: this and his extravagant prices, which he has raised even beyond what he asked at Paris, will probably get him as much money as he covets, for he is avaricious beyond imagination". Others dubbed him a "quack", noting that people thought him "an excellent painter because he appears to be a Turk". In perhaps his most famous self-portrait, held at the Uffizi, Liotard sports a turban, though his costume, as Fehlmann notes, and even his beard, are actually typical of a Moldavian nobleman at the court of Jassy. However, he boldly describes himself on the painting's face as "*de Genève*" but "*Surnommé le Peintre Turc*".

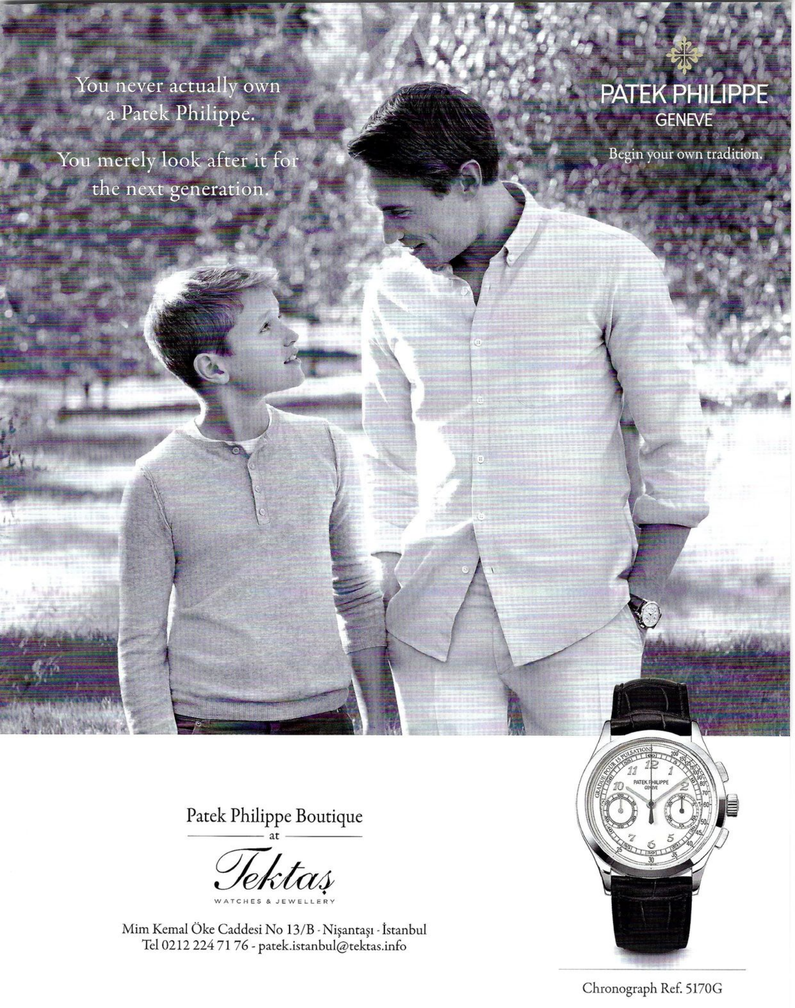
Liotard's Constantinople subjects were often merchants, thoroughly embedded locally, who like him wore Turkish clothing, not for stage effect as did later arrivals, but as a means of travelling and doing business unobtrusively.

The Istanbul experience, Fehlmann and others observe, also shaped Liotard's palette, which was influenced by the pure colours and jewel-like quality of Persian miniatures. "Liotard had access to Persian miniatures," Stevens says, "and that could well have interested him as a medium somewhat similar to pastel, with a matt rather than shiny finish, which you get with oil. It would have given him a sense of brilliance of colour."

His Orientalism, Stevens notes, "is not an imaginative reconstruction of the exotic or the other. It is based absolutely on direct observation. He did no harem paintings in the 19th-century sense. He does scenes of contemporary life – including interior scenes of women sitting on sofas, or a woman on her way to the bath – but she's fully clothed and all the detail is very meticulously observed. There's none of that titillation, this quasi-erotic view of the harem that you get so often in 19th-century painting." ◆

'Jean-Étienne Liotard' is at the Royal Academy, London, until January 31 (royalacademy.org.uk). The book of the exhibition is available from cornucopia.net at £35, post-free to subscribers

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Chronograph Ref. 5170G

THREE GROUNDBREAKING ARCHAEOLOGICAL EXHIBITIONS SHINE A SPOTLIGHT ON GREAT ANATOLIAN EMPIRES AND THEIR CHAMPIONS. ISTANBUL SHOWCASES JOHN GARSTANG'S ILLUMINATING WORK ON THE HITTITES. BERLIN CELEBRATES THE WORK OF FRIEDRICH SARRE, WHO BROUGHT THE SELJUKS TO LIFE. AND TREASURES FROM THE PHRYGIA OF KING MIDAS HEAD FOR PHILADELPHIA

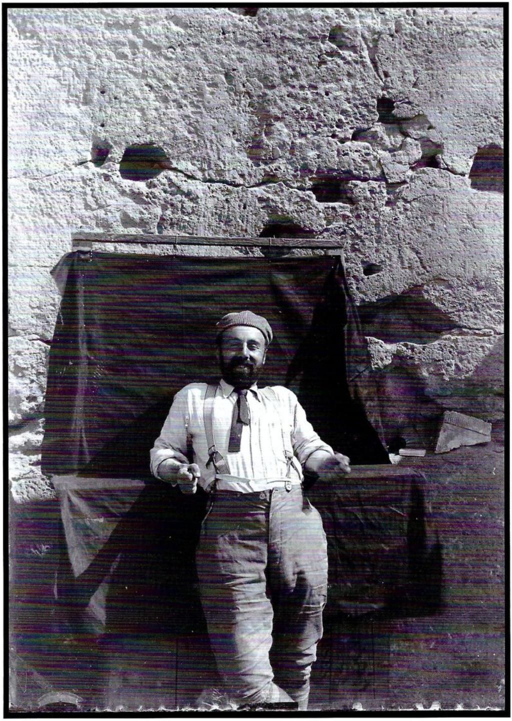
HISTORY ON A PLATE

THOUSANDS OF GLASS NEGATIVES RECORD THE TRAVELS OF JOHN GARSTANG IN SEARCH OF THE LOST PRE-HELLENIC CIVILISATION OF THE HITTITES

John Garstang was a somewhat chaotic figure who scraped a third in maths at Oxford and once cancelled a meeting with Atatürk because he'd forgotten his suit trousers. Yet he did more than anyone to illuminate the world of the Hittites, legendary builders and charioteers, who bestrode Anatolia in the second millennium BC, even enthusing the hard-headed commercial princes of his native Liverpool with his passion for archaeology.

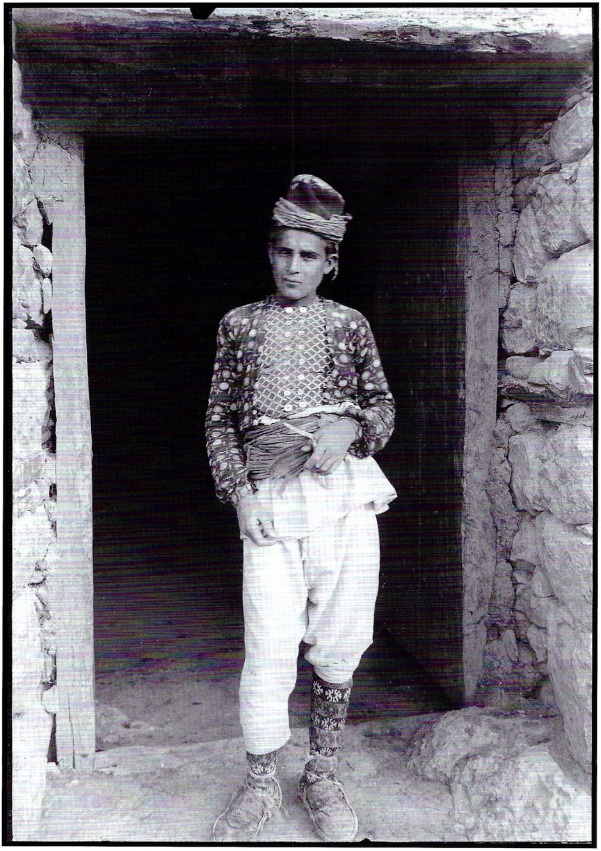
Garstang pioneered the use of photography to document archaeological findings, and his 1907 survey of Anatolia and northern Syria established the full extent of the Hittite empire.

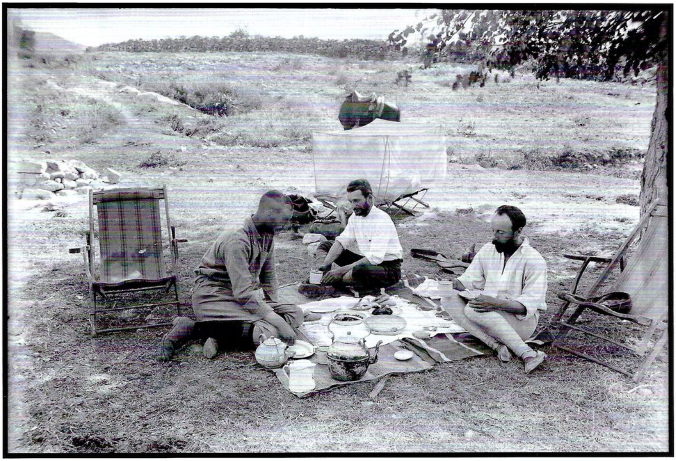
At Oxford he had been inspired by the Rev Archibald Henry Sayce to seek the great pre-Hellenic empire Sayce believed was waiting to be discovered. He was apprenticed in Abydos under William Flinders Petrie.



RIGHT JOHN GARSTANG (1876–1956), IN FRONT OF THE BEIT KHALLAF TOMB, EGYPT, IN 1901
OPPOSITE TAKEN WITH A ROYAL RUBY CAMERA, 407 GLASS NEGATIVES SURVIVE FROM GARSTANG'S 1907 EXPEDITION ACROSS ANATOLIA. THIS IMAGE OF A YOUNG VILLAGE MAN WAS TAKEN BY HORST SCHLIEPHACK, WHOSE COMPOSITIONAL SKILL WAS MATCHED BY HIS ABILITY TO MAKE HIS SUBJECTS RELAX

PHOTOGRAPHS: THE GARSTANG MUSEUM OF ARCHAEOLOGY, UNIVERSITY OF LIVERPOOL



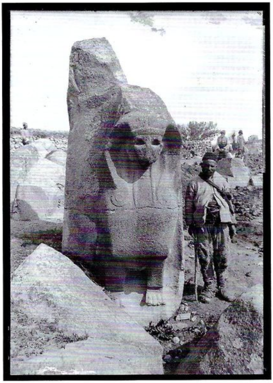


PHOTOGRAPHS: THE GARSTANG MUSEUM OF ARCHAEOLOGY, UNIVERSITY OF LIVERPOOL

In Egypt and Nubia he worked at 20 sites, honing his camera skills. His quest in Turkey began with a setback when the permit to dig at the Hittite capital, Boğazköy, was granted to a German team.

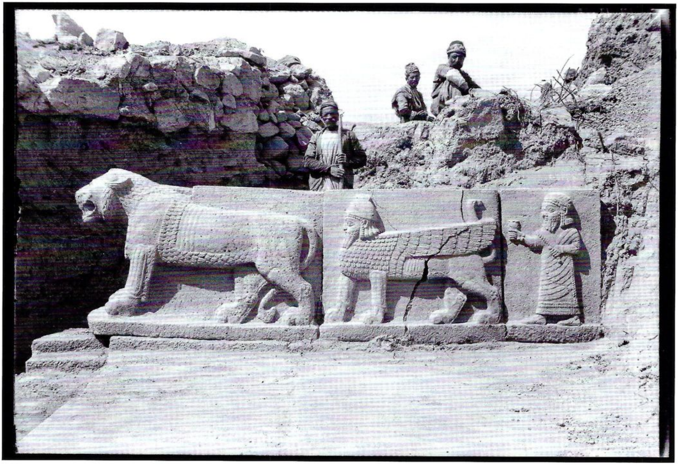
Undaunted, Garstang set out on horseback across Anatolia on "a grand journey… brimful of interest". Thousands of glass negatives from his explorations, many taken by the Georgian-born Russo-German Horst Schliephack, survive, although Garstang's Aegean and Hittite Museum in Liverpool was destroyed by a bomb in the Second World War, with the loss of many valuable artefacts, including plaster casts he had made at Yazılıkaya and Sakçagözü. The images were left to the University of Liverpool's Garstang Museum, and are the subject of a compelling new exhibition and book.

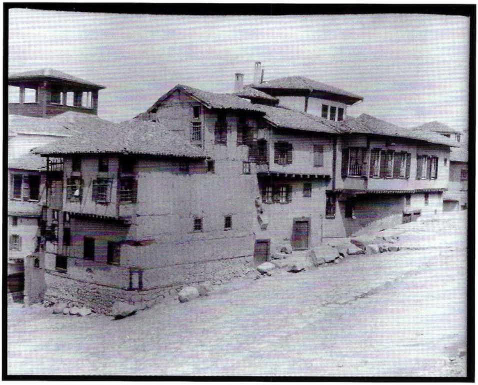
'John Garstang's Footsteps Across Anatolia' is at the Research Center for Anatolian Civilizations, İstiklâl Cad 181, Beyoğlu, Istanbul, until December 10; rcac.ku.edu.tr/en. The book of the exhibition is available from cornucopia.net at £20



Above Picnic at a camp in 1907, complete with canvas chairs and a folding bed with mosquito net. Garstang is on the right

Left The Sphinx Gate at Alaca Höyük in 1907, when it was being excavated by Theodore Makridi Bey, the Ottoman Greek archaeologist who succeeded Osman Hamdi Bey as director of the Istanbul Archaeological Museum. Atatürk would help to finance further excavations at the site in 1935. This photograph was published in Garstang's seminal 1929 work 'The Hittite Empire'





Above The gate of a ruined palace at Sakçagözü, a late-Hittite site near Gazİantep, now in Ankara's Museum of Anatolian Civilizations

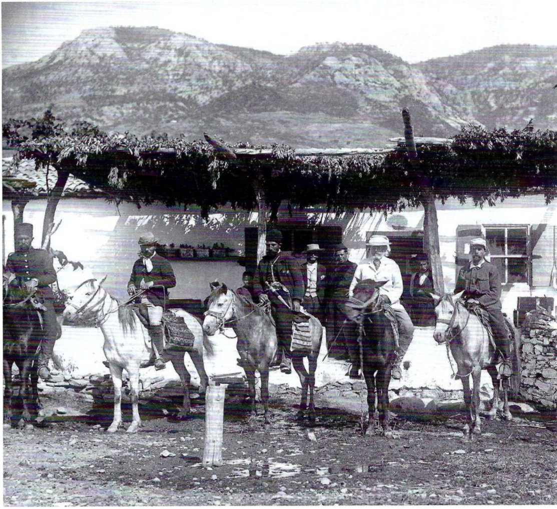
Left Photographed in 1907, this house in Ankara has stone foundations, mud-brick walls, wooden balconies and a 'cİhannüma', or viewing pavilion, on top. Turkey's future capital would be built on the site of the Hittite city of Ankuwa

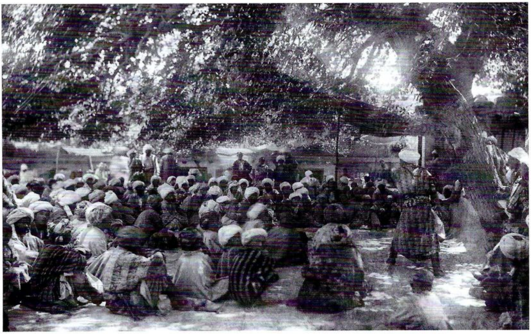
In 1950 Garstang would look back on his visit and casually recall his undertaking, whose scale and ambition were enormous: 'I found myself with three companions in 1907 in Ankara, then a small town, where we bought horses and organised a caravan'

THE ROAD LESS TRAVELLED

WHILE OTHERS OBSESSED ABOUT ANTIQUITY, THE INTREPID COLLECTOR FRIEDRICH SARRE TROD HIS OWN PATH, TO BECOME A FOUNDING FATHER OF ISLAMIC ART STUDIES. A MAJOR EXHIBITION IN BERLIN CELEBRATES HIS LIFE AND WORK.

BY ROBERT OUSTERHOUT

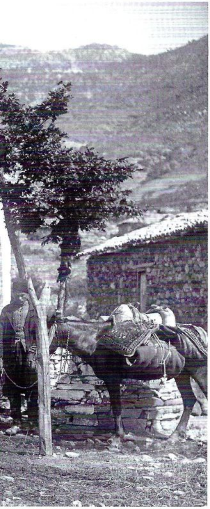




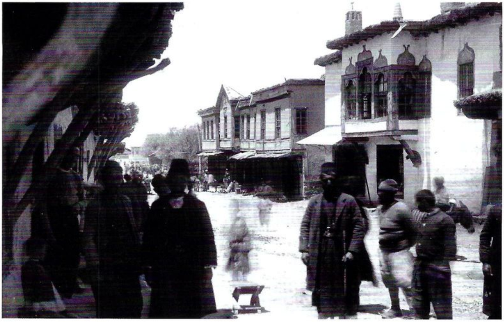
In the summer of 1895, when most archaeologists were wrangling over Turkey's classical sites, a young Berliner of Huguenot descent, Friedrich Theodor Paul Sarre (1865–1945), had his eyes not on antiquity but on medieval Anatolia. As the art historian Oya Pancaroğlu noted, he trekked "the less travelled road between Smyrna and Aksaray". The Americans John Henry Haynes and JR Sitlington Sterrett had taken that route a decade earlier, but Sarre's focus was on the Seljuks, Turks from Central Asia whose empire in the 11th-century stretched from the Aegean to the Hindu Kush, and whose monuments were little known.

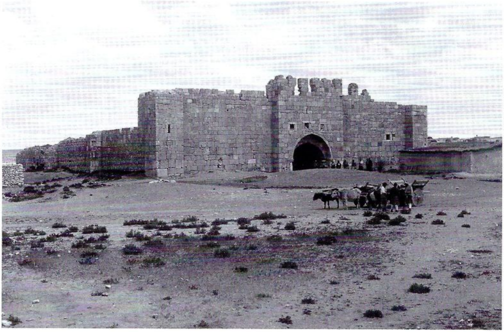
In Smyrna Sarre met Carl Humann, the great excavator of Pergamon, whose daughter Maria he would marry. Humann not only encouraged Sarre to seek a site for his own excavations – though that would be a dozen years later, when he and Ernst Herzfeld undertook the study of Abbasid palaces

TOP FRIEDRICH SARRE'S TRAVELLING COMPANIONS IN 1895 INCLUDED ALFRED OSBORNE (CENTRE), A DOCTOR AND AMATEUR CLASSICIST
RIGHT SARRE PHOTOGRAPHED THIS STORYTELLER IN BUKHARA IN 1898, DURING HIS TRAVELS IN CENTRAL ASIA

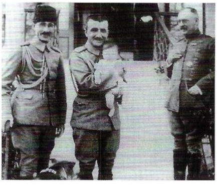


Above Sarre in Berlin, c1895
Top right He photographed Kadinhani, on the Konya plain, in the same year
Above right The 13th-century Sultan Han caravanserai, a Seljuk masterpiece on the Silk Road near Aksaray, made a big impression on Sarre

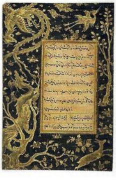




All photographs: Staatliche Museen zu Berlin, Museum für Islamische Kunst



Jürgen Liepe



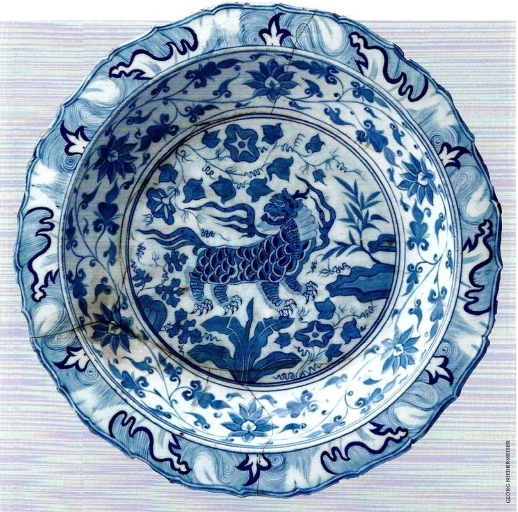
Far left Enver Pasha (centre), leader of the Young Turks, with his daughter Mahpeyker in 1917, when he was Minister of War. Sarre, wearing German military uniform, is on the right
Left One of Sarre's acquisitions, a page from a copy of the 'Gulistan' of the Persian poet Sa'di made in Shiraz, c1526–30

at Samarra in Iraq – but introduced him to a wide social network that linked the luminaries of Berlin and Turkey.

Sarre's *Reise in Kleinasien* (*Travels in Asia Minor*), published in 1896, impressively illustrated with his own photographs, set the tone for his travels, which, by 1907, would have taken him across Turkey into Iraq, Iran and Central Asia. With a doctorate in history of art under his belt, a budding career in the museum world, and a family fortune at his disposal, he collected as he went, gaining a reputation as a founding father of Islamic art studies.

His expeditions, excavations and systematic collecting, both in the East and in the art markets of Europe, drew attention to the field, far beyond the borders of Germany. His scientific oeuvre is immense: *Monuments of Persian Architecture* and *Archaeological Journey in the Euphrates and Tigris Region* remain standard reference works. But his greatest legacy is the Islamic Department of the former Royal Museums in Berlin, which he founded with Wilhelm von Bode, the all-powerful curator and art historian. Sarre was director between 1904 and 1931.

Sarre's numerous acquisitions (among them the Aleppo Room), and donations from his own collections, form the foundation of the holdings of what evolved into the Museum of Islamic Art, now hosting an exhibition to celebrate the 150th anniversary of his birth. Curated by Julia Gonnella, it focuses not only on Sarre's contributions as art collector and museum director, but on his role in the First World War, his relations with Turkey, and the motley, fascinating historic figures with whom he mixed. Sarre assisted the archaeologist and painter Osman Hamdi Bey and his brother Halil Edhem Bey in setting up the Evkaf Museum in Istanbul (now the Museum of Turkish and Islamic Arts). But he also consorted with characters such as Julius Harry Löytved, the German consul in Konya and a notorious smuggler, through whom many



GEORG NIEDERMEISER

DISH OF THE DAY

Prominent among Friedrich Sarre's artefacts on show in the exhibition at Berlin's Museum of Islamic Art is an important large blue and white dish that he bought in 1898. In the centre of this charger, 40cm in diameter, is the figure of a dragon-headed winged *qilin*, one of the four auspicious or noble beasts of Chinese mythology.

Looks are deceptive, however. What appears to be indisputably Chinese is in fact an Ottoman copy of a 14th-century Chinese charger of the late Yuan or early Ming period. It was made in Iznik in the 1520s, a time of experimentation in ceramics that saw the town's potters directly copying Chinese porcelains for the first time. Sarre is recorded as buying it in Constantinople.

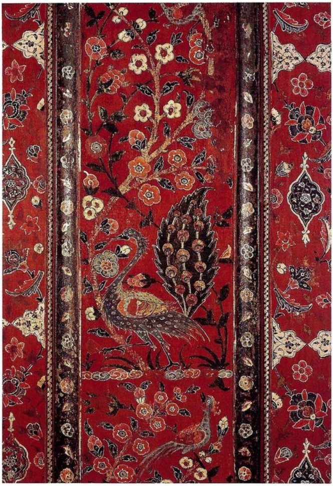
The *qilin* is a fabulous creature, a chimera that takes many forms. John Pope of the Freer Gallery in Washington – the man who in the 1950s changed the course of art history by dating a group of the Topkapı's vast collection of blue-and-white to the 14th century – wrote: "... it [the *qilin*] appears mainly in two forms: one is a sort of leonine beast with small scales and horns, and the other is a more agile animal with a graceful body of generally cervine aspect covered with large blue scales with white edges. It has a horse's mane and tail and horns on its head."

Sarre's *qilin* (above) clearly fits Pope's first description: leonine, with claws, scales and a small horn. On the other hand, the *qilin* flying over rocks in the Topkapı's 14th-century Chinese charger (below) belongs to the second type: it has long horns, a horse's tail and mane, with the body and hooves of a deer.

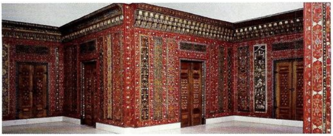
Sarre's dish has a border of serpentine waves on its rim that marks it as a Yuan-inspired Iznik *qilin*. Unusually, the beast is facing to the right. A leaf painted over the tail shows that the *qilin* in the Topkapı dish was painted first, before the rest of the landscape and the dense pattern of morning glory.

But the two dishes share one exceptional feature: in both, the figure of the *qilin* is still intact. A wondrous beast indeed.

John Carswell

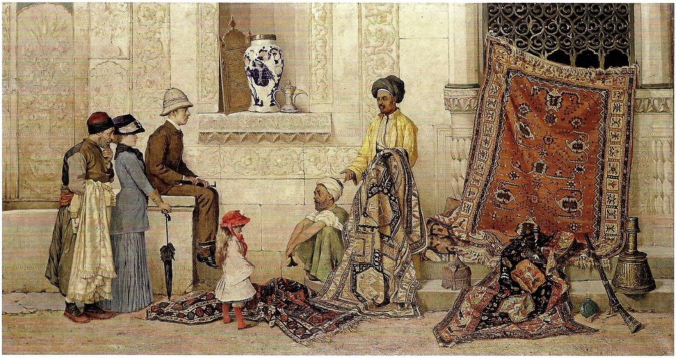


ALL IMAGES: STAATLICHE MUSEEN ZU BERLIN, MUSEUM FÜR ISLAMISCHE KUNST

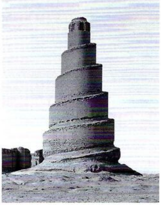


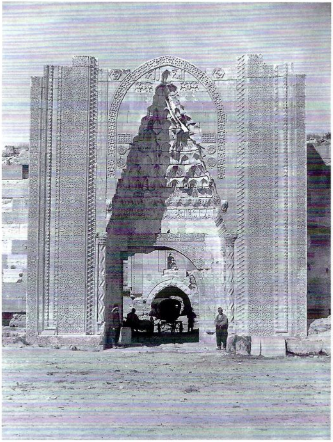
GEORG NIEDERMEISER

LEFT AND ABOVE The Aleppo Room, one of Berlin's greatest gems. The 35 metres of finely painted panelling (1600–03) depicts Biblical scenes in the manner of Ottoman book illumination. Bought by Sarre in Aleppo in 1912, it came from a Christian merchant's house BOTTOM 'The Persian Carpet Dealer', 1888, by Osman Hamdi Bey, archaeologist and Turkey's head of antiquities BELOW Sarre's children



STAATLICHE MUSEEN ZU BERLIN, NATIONALGALERIE, PHOTO: BERND KUHNERT





RIGHT THE PORTAL OF SULTAN HAN FASCINATED SARRE, WHO RECORDED THE INSCRIPTIONS
ABOVE THE MINARET OF THE 9TH-CENTURY GREAT MOSQUE OF SAMARRA, IRAQ, 1919

STAATLICHE MUSEEN ZU BERLIN, NATIONALGALERIE. PHOTO: BERND KUHNERT

Seljuk artefacts found their way to Sarre's museum.

Still more controversially, he and Maria were close to the Young Turk Enver Pasha when he was stationed in Berlin as military attaché in 1909. Enver later moved to Sarre's suburb of Neubabelsberg, where a bridge bears his name. In the First World War, while Sarre was posted by the military in Mesopotamia and Persia, Enver became Minister of War. This would have a strong influence on German–Ottoman relations. When the Ottoman Empire was defeated (along with Germany and Austria), Enver went into hiding in Neubabelsberg, before leaving to fight for the Pan-Turkic cause in Central Asia.

Sarre had worked unpaid at the museum, but the financial setbacks of the war obliged him to negotiate a salary, in exchange for 683 objects of Islamic or early Persian origin. The Berlin exhibition includes photographs and documents, the objects Sarre collected privately and for the museum, and others donated by his extensive circle of friends. On show for the first time will be outstanding Persian and Indian paintings and calligraphy that until recently were in his family's possession.

How Islamic Art Came to Berlin: The museum director and collector Friedrich Sarre is at the Museum of Islamic Art, Pergamonmuseum, Berlin, until January 24, 2016. *www.smb.museum*

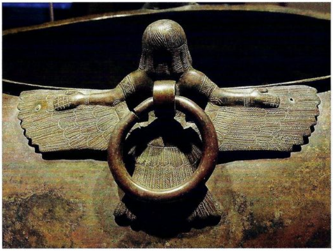
THERE'S GOLD IN THEM THAR HILLS

LEAVING TURKEY FOR THE FIRST TIME, TREASURES FROM THE ERA OF KING MIDAS WILL TRAVEL TO THE USA.

BY EMMA HARPER

From a distance, the tumuli at Gordion in central Anatolia look like natural contours of the barren landscape. But since 1950, archaeologists from the University of Pennsylvania Museum of Archaeology and Anthropology have unearthed extraordinary artefacts from the tombs beneath what are in fact burial mounds. The likely source of these treasures? King Midas, who ruled the kingdom of Phrygia from its capital city of Gordion, c750–700 BC. While most of the objects found at Gordion seem to have eluded the "golden touch" of Midas, they are still incredibly valuable – especially those found in the excavation of the 50-metre-high Tumulus MM (Midas Mound). The tomb here, believed to be the final resting place of Midas's father Gordias, is the world's oldest standing wooden building. Inside it, the team from Penn Museum found a skeleton in what was left of a cedar coffin, surrounded by serving vessels, wooden tables and food remains from an extensive funeral banquet.

Most of the artefacts unearthed at Gordion are now housed in museums in Ankara, Istanbul, Antalya and Gordion. Yet with the support of the Turkish Republic, 120 objects selected by Dr C Brian Rose, Penn Museum's Gordion Archaeological Project Director, are travelling to Philadelphia for *The Golden Age of King Midas*, (Feb 13 – Nov 27, 2016), which tells the broader story of a golden age and a legendary king. *www.penn.museum*



PENN MUSEUM GORDION ARCHIVE, 2014.4080

LEFT THE FIGURE OF A SIREN FROM ONE OF THREE 40-GALLON BRONZE CAULDRONS EXCAVATED AT GORDION IN 1957, FROM THE TOMB OF A PHRYGIAN RULER THOUGHT TO BE GORDIAS, FATHER OF KING MIDAS. THE CAULDRON DATES TO C740BC AND PROBABLY HELD A BEVERAGE OF BEER, WINE AND MEAD THAT WAS PART OF AN ELABORATE FUNERAL BANQUET

ZERO

COUNTDOWN TO THE FUTURE

OOOO

2 SEPTEMBER - 10 JANUARY

OOOO

ZERO EXHIBITION AT THE SAKIP SABANCI MUSEUM

OOOO

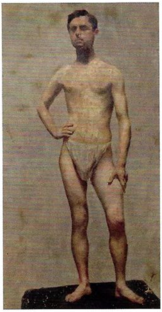
AKBANK
SANAT

SSM
SABANCI
ÜNİVERSİTESİ
SAKIP
SABANCI
MÜZESİ

ZERO

STRIKING FIGURES AND A JOYOUS NEW ART

THREE OF THE BEST: THE BIRTH OF THE TURKISH NUDE, A SHIRT THAT WEAVES MAGIC, AND PURE GOLD IN A LANDSCAPE

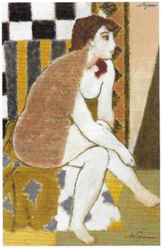


AHMET MEREY COLLECTION

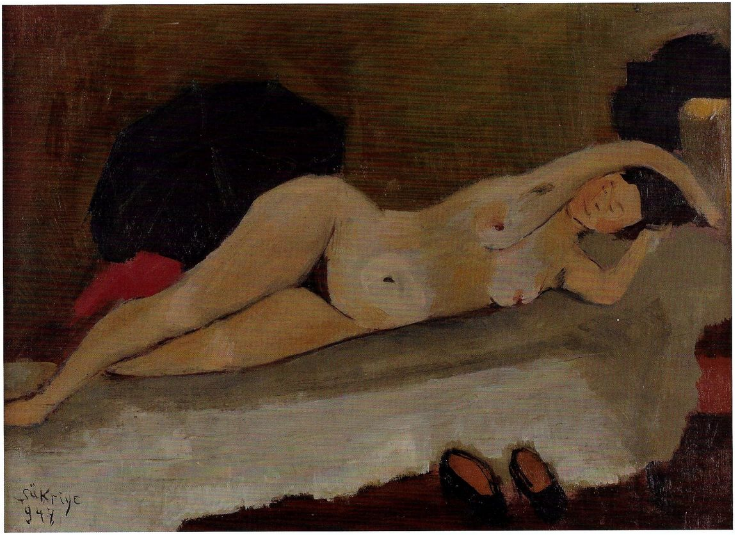
PROGRESS MADE FLESH

◁ ▷ ▽ *Bare, Naked, Nude (Üryani, Çıplak, Nü): A Story of Modernization in Turkish Painting* (Nov 25 – Feb 7, 2016) crowns the Pera Museum's 10th anniversary celebrations. The first full-blown exhibition of its kind, it traces the revolution in art that gave birth to Turkish painting in the 20th century. Sent by the sultan to study under salon artists in Paris, students returned at the outbreak of the First World War, bringing with them a whole new set of values.

Within a few years life drawing was mainstream and nudes were even hanging on yalı walls. The stark study on the left is by one of the pioneers of this '1914 Generation', Hikmet Onat (1888–1977). Nuri İyem, one of his students, painted the appealing seated woman above in the 1950s.

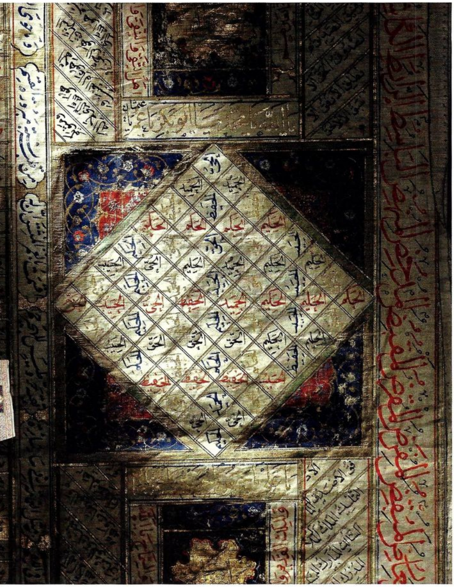


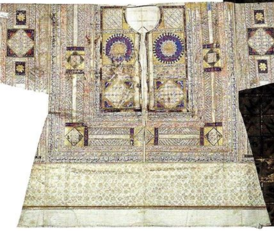
Şükriye Dikmen reversed the direction of travel: the 1947 reclining nude below was painted in Istanbul before she left for Paris.



MAGICAL NUMBERS

▷ A verse in the Koran relates how the Prophet Joseph gave his own talismanic shirt to his father, miraculously restoring his sight. No such feat is recorded for the shirt from the Worcester Art Museum recently sold at Sotheby's London, but verses from the Koran, numbers and invocations promise protection to the wearer. Painted in striking geometric designs, bold colours and bright gold on cotton, it is of the highest quality, probably made for an official of high rank. Most such shirts are in the Topkapı, so it is rare to find one at auction. This one, dated AH991 (AD1583), fetched £185,000, more than double its estimate. Its first recorded buyer was Theron J Damon (1883–1973), who taught at Robert College in Istanbul before the First World War, travelled widely and recorded the end of empire in vivid photographs published in *National Geographic*.





POP-UP ENLIGHTENMENT

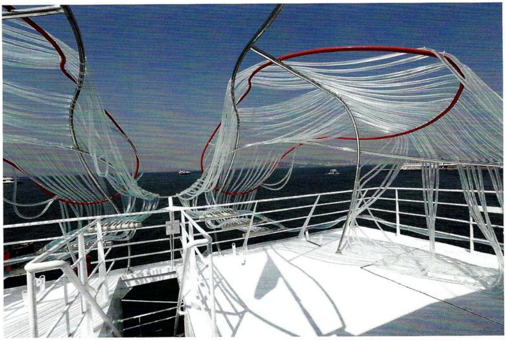
◁ *The Sky Over Nine Columns* (2012) took over the Bosphorus terrace of the Sakıp Sabancı Museum (SSM). The glowing golden pillars by Heinz Mack, a founder of the ZERO project, are covered in almost 15 million tesserae glittering with 24-carat gold leaf. They will shimmer on at the SSM until April 2016, beyond the exhibition of which they are part.

The SSM often holds fascinating exhibitions. But for pure joy nothing can beat *ZERO: Countdown to the Future* (until January 10, 2016). Like pomegranate juice it lifts the spirits today just as much as in 1957, when ZERO was an avant-garde project dreamt up in Düsseldorf in the darkness of post-war Germany. Mack was bent on banishing squalor and pessimism and 'starting afresh from zero' with principles of light, space, colour and movement. ZERO became pan-European, flourishing – often in one-evening-only shows – until 1966, when it was disbanded.

Inside, the SSM is a maze of surprises: you might find a square of pure madder red, a knee-deep carpet of ultramarine pigment by Yves Klein, or two-storey-high inflatable palm trees in primary colours. Or you are invited to sit in darkness as drums like Tibetan prayer wheels sprinkle light across the ceiling, akin to headlights reflected off wet streets by passing cars. This is pure enlightenment.

BRIDGE OVER TROUBLED WATER?

Thomas Roueché looks back on 'Saltwater: A Theory of Thought Forms', the theme of the 2015 Biennial



Above 'Saltwater Heart', by Pinar Yoldaş, 2015, an installation of water pumps, air compressor and stainless steel construction pipes on the Kaptan Paşa Seabus

According to *Art Review,* Carolyn Christov-Bakargiev is the 19th most powerful person in the art world. She was also the drafter – as she prefers to be described – of this year's Istanbul Biennial, her first major exhibition since the extraordinarily well-received *Documenta* in 2012.

Christov-Bakargiev pulled together a masterful list of more than 200 artists, many of whom produced unbelievably exciting and successful work for the 14th Biennial, which ran until November 1. Following the logic of *Documenta*, which famously spread out its works across the city of Kassel, the Biennial seemed to draw its sometimes reluctant visitors across Istanbul and into its depths, forcing an engagement with the city which white-cube approaches often avoid.

Highlights included Anna Boghiguian's work, installed in the Galata Greek School, elegantly matched by Emre Hüner's sculptures and video installation on the floor above. Istanbul Modern's ground floor hosted a vast collection of paintings by Charles Leadbetter and Annie Besant, theosophists who tried to paint emotions, opposite the contemporaneous and scientifically important work of Santiago Ramón y Cajal, whose paintings of brain cells won him a Nobel Prize in 1906. On Büyükada, a series of stunning works sat in the island's most architecturally interesting houses, not least Ed Atkins's astonishing video work in the Rizzo Mansion. Farthest-flung was Pierre Huyge's invisible work sunk around the coast of Siviriada, in memory of the dogs sent there to die by the Ottoman government in 1910.

Christov-Bakargiev often talks of her eschewal of the term "curator", and her politically sensitive and responsive approach to Istanbul was evident throughout. Indeed, her preference for the term "researcher" (or "draftsperson") is in accord with the rare sense of history found in this Biennial. The result was an elegant, thoughtful and delicate show, one that attempted to grapple with the uniquely precarious situation of Istanbul today.

Istanbul has hosted Biennials since 1987, coinciding with many of the city's more difficult moments, not least the earthquake of 1999. The 2013 Biennial was almost completely overshadowed by the Gezi Park protests that preceded it, and alluded to tensions around urban redevelopment and gentrification (a broad trend from which it is difficult to extract the Biennial) with an imitation wrecking ball bouncing off the front of Antrepo, where the show was held. Perhaps the only work that spoke to the contradictions of the event, eschewing kitsch and camp, was a lecture by the artist Hito Stereyl about the bullet which had killed her friend, an activist in Turkey in the 1980s. She traced its manufacture back to Koç Holding, one of the main sponsors of the Biennial itself.

Yet rarely do such works pierce through the difficulties faced by a country with a political situation as complex as Turkey's. The image of three-year-old Alan Kurdi's drowned body hung over the opening week, making preoccupation with the city's history seem more than a little naive. The scale of the political challenge faced by Istanbul today, though recognised by Christov-Bakargiev and many of the artists, could not fail to overwhelm the visitor. On Büyükada, stumbling down the garden path of Trotsky's house, it was hard not to see the nostalgia often embraced by Istanbul as a distraction. And reaching the shore to be faced by Adrián Villa-Rojas's massive white animals perched in the sea, such a distraction took on physical form, grotesque decoys from the horrors of another sea not far away, the wider Mediterranean.

For all Christov-Bakargiev's success in this Biennial – one of the best in recent years, this was a week that called into question just what such events are for. As international guests flocked to a slew of parties and openings, like visitors from spaceships descending from the sky, one wondered precisely what kind of engagement a Biennial asks of its visitors.

Christov-Bakargiev said in her opening speech that she is not a politician because she believes art has the power to shape the souls of people, and that its influence trickles down to shape government. Meanwhile, thousands of migrants made their way across Eastern and Central Europe, transforming political realities as they went. In Istanbul 200 pro-government supporters attacked the offices of the *Hürriyet* newspaper. In the context of such consciousness-changing events, how can even the best Biennial seem anything but impotent? ◆

The 14th Istanbul Biennial: www.14b.iksv.org

Thomas Roueché is contributing editor for CORNUCOPIA *and editor of Tank; tom.roueche@gmail.com*

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Private view

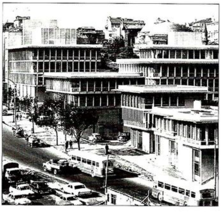
ANDREW FINKEL PAYS TRIBUTE TO HIS LATE MOTHER, A CALM, GRACIOUS PRESENCE TO THE END. AT HER FUNERAL IN BRUGES, A PRISTINE CITY OF MEDIEVAL SPIRES AND TURRETS, HE FEELS A MILLION MILES FROM THE ARCHITECTURAL CHAOS OF ISTANBUL, HIS HOME FOR 50 YEARS. BUT THERE IS, HE RECALLS, ONE DISCREET MODERNIST MASTERPIECE THAT HAPPILY RUBS SHOULDERS WITH ITS GRAND, ANCIENT NEIGHBOURS

Lasting impressions

It is the morning of my mother's funeral and I owe myself some explanation as to why my thoughts are trying to make their way to the Social Security Complex in the Zeyrek neighbourhood of Istanbul. My mother died peacefully (as she did all things), far away, in the medieval city of Bruges, so it is a long way for those thoughts to travel.

The contrast between my parents' home in the capital of West Flanders and my own in the capital of Byzantium could not be greater. The one has the quiet manners of a provincial merchant, the other the haughty air of an emperor who loves gold, but loves power more. The spires and turrets of Bruges have a carefully preserved air, with not a brick out of place. Even the façade of the local McDonald's is tastefully integrated into its surroundings. Zeyrek, by contrast, is a hub for a city accustomed to chaos. It is full of traffic and noise and some of the most important buildings ever constructed.

Zeyrek takes its name from the large mosque tucked off to the side beside a traffic underpass. It is a conversion of one of the largest structures of Byzantium's second golden age – the 12th-century Pantocrator monastic complex, the model on which subsequent Orthodox church architecture was based. It is overlooked by the buttresses and domes of the 16th-century Süleymaniye Mosque. Up the road is the fourth-century Valens aqueduct, the final piece in a hydraulic system that brought water into the city from over 250 miles away, using gravity alone – a piece of engineering that was late antiquity's equivalent of the Large Hadron Collider.



How does one construct a modern building in the shadow of so much greatness? The Social Security Complex was completed in 1964, just before I set eyes on Istanbul, but I don't remember ever going to see it. It was to win its architect, Sedad Hakkı Eldem, an Aga Khan award 20 years or so later, but as far as I know it figures on no tour guide's agenda. I must have passed it a hundred times before realising it was there.

Once I saw a picture of it, I recognised it instantly, or at least I realised how I had managed to overlook it for so many years. Despite its refinement of traditional elements, it is an unashamedly modern building. At the same time it does not intrude. So much of what passes for modernist revival of Ottoman tradition in Istanbul is imitation, conceit or ostentation. Eldem's work was in dialogue with Le Corbusier and Frank Lloyd Wright. He set out to discover what was truly modern in traditional buildings and oblige that architecture to grow up.

> *'Anonymity in architecture is not an easy matter and not many architects can do it well' – Sedad Hakkı Eldem*

"Anonymity in architecture is not an easy matter and not many architects can do it well," he said.

My mother? She was a gentle soul with a knack for putting the most unquiet heart at ease. She was kind and she was gracious and by the end of her life as frail as a whisper. But she remained sharp and good-humoured, so we never thought of her as ill – even though it took every ounce of breath she had to walk a few paces. She tiptoed her defiance. The lighter her tread, the greater the impression she left.

Dorothy Caine Finkel, born Brooklyn, New York, July 11, 1925; died Bruges, Belgium, September 9, 2015.

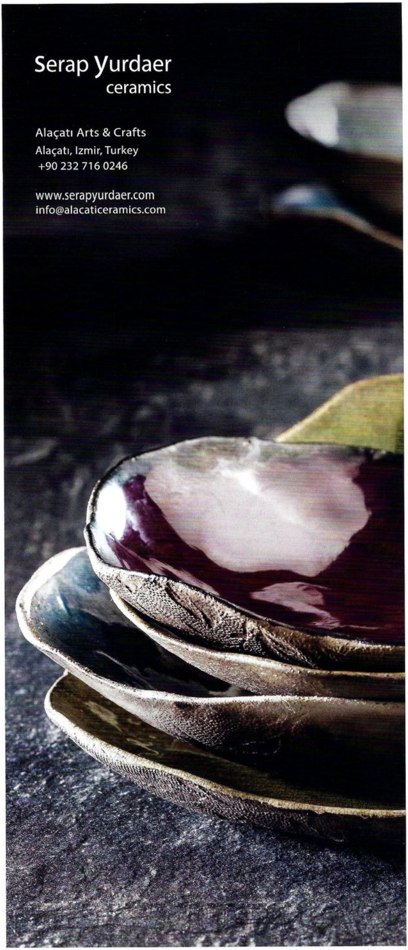
Now the shoe's on the other foot

Chancing upon the word "cordovan" in an acrostic puzzle the other day, I did a double take. It was like being confronted by a bully from my youth whose leer had lost its menace. I looked it up in the dictionary to make sure it was as harmless as it seemed. The accepted convention is that words convey meaning in the way that footsteps lead to a destination, by one following the other. But of course some rules are made to be broken and I was surprised – abracadabra! – to be whisked off to a place I would not think to visit.

Cordovan derives from the Spanish city of Córdoba and is the name for both the special leather the city produced and the colour of the dye most easily absorbed by the hides: a brown with a deep red burgundy glow. As a child I knew that colour from the tins of Kiwi shoe polish, which we kept in a shoebox (appropriately enough), along with rags and a variety of brushes caked with hardened wax. One of the weekend chores for me and my two brothers was to lay newspaper on the floor and shine the household shoes. Our father, though not a disciplinarian, had been in the marines. Polished shoes and a tightly made bed with hospital corners were among the manners which he thought would make us men.

I didn't mind the polishing. It was the shoes themselves that made me wince. I longed to wear the penny loafers all the really popular kids had – the kind with a decorative band across the uppers with a slot that would hold a coin. My mother, however, held a deep conviction that such loose-fitting fashion was a recipe for fallen arches in later life. No matter that I was being rendered lame there and then, a social cripple in the eyes of my peers. I had to wear orthopaedic lace-ups. Black was much too formal and brown a shade too dull. So cordovan they were.

When I was 13, nearly half a century ago, we left our suburban neighbourhood of Philadelphia to live first in a small town near Lausanne. From there we moved to Istanbul. I sometimes wonder what sort of person I would have become if I had stayed in the groove into which I was born. I doubt if



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I would have ended up serving sodas behind the drugstore counter where so many of us hung out after school. I am not in touch with many of my schoolmates, but I know they have not wasted their lives. One is a surgeon, doing triage in Honolulu, another an inspirational speaker; there is a magazine editor, a mother of twins, a publisher and a computer analyst for the FBI. One of us even became a much-hated under-secretary for defence. I would have had chances.

At the time I thought I had had a lucky escape from state school and suburbia, which made me something of a snob. Mentally, I lorded my sophistication over the loafer-wearing friends I left behind. They, or so I thought, might judge people by the cut of their shoes, but I had been to the Parthenon and the Louvre, eaten the *fettuccine* at Alfredo's, and, despite being underage, could order a glass of Vaud to go with my fondue. They could not see, as I could see from my living-room window, the ships gliding up and down the Bosphorus.

So I clambered up the ladder of my own self-esteem without looking down at my shoes. At the same time, I was conscious of hierarchies within my own family breaking down. We were all strangers in strange lands and the equality that imposed took precedence over the deference that exists between parent and child. My mother no longer insisted on my footwear, but that no longer mattered. People spoke languages I struggled to understand, so I no longer had to blame shoes for the suspicion that I did not belong. Odder still, I began to enjoy my insecurity. Being from somewhere else brought its own status.

I spent one year at school in Istanbul in 1967, and it was no coincidence that my friends were Greeks, Armenians and Jews – Turkey's vestigial peoples. It's not that I didn't get along with Muslim Turks, but I vividly recollect being reprimanded by a small delegation of friends for not standing at attention during the Monday-morning rendition of the national anthem. Instinctively I knew that the shoe had not been cobbled which would allow me to fit in.

At the time the far more impressive revelation was that there was no need to shine shoes myself. For a few *kuruş* you could have someone do it for you. It was a very precise ritual of putting one foot on the stand to receive the polish, then exchange feet back and forth to receive the wax which would be brushed and rubbed with cloth to produce a high-gloss shine. I stopped making my own bed as well. We could easily afford a maid, who came every day to scrub and cook. The concierge of our two-storey apartment house left a loaf of hot bread on the stoop every morning and in the evening removed the trash. We also had a driver – a man with his own taxi who dropped us at school before taking my father to work. I took the trolley car home, which was no hardship.

I like to think that I have ended up making my life in Turkey because it was a place that I liked, where I have friends and where what I do makes a difference. It can't be because I never have had to iron a shirt or shine a shoe. I have stood in the dock as a prosecutor asked for a six-year sentence for a newspaper article I wrote. My trial made the international press; there was even a letter from my editor about it in the front of *Time* magazine. But in my quieter moments I ask myself if this notoriety wasn't too easily earned, a bit of cut-price shine. ◆

Andrew Finkel, contributing editor to Cornucopia, *has worked from Istanbul as a journalist for 25 years. He is a founding member of P24, (platform24.org), in support of media independence*

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BOOKS

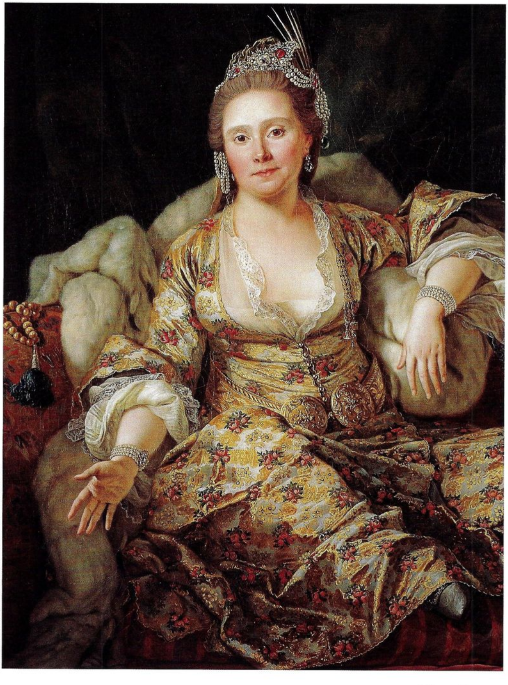
The delights of turquerie, buccaneering Albanians, Istanbul's jazz age, the kindest cut-outs of all, Victoria's man in Istanbul, fakers and fantasists, Sait Faik's unforgettable characters, and a caique named Bouboulina

WHEN EUROPE FLIRTED WITH TURKEY

William Kynan-Wilson

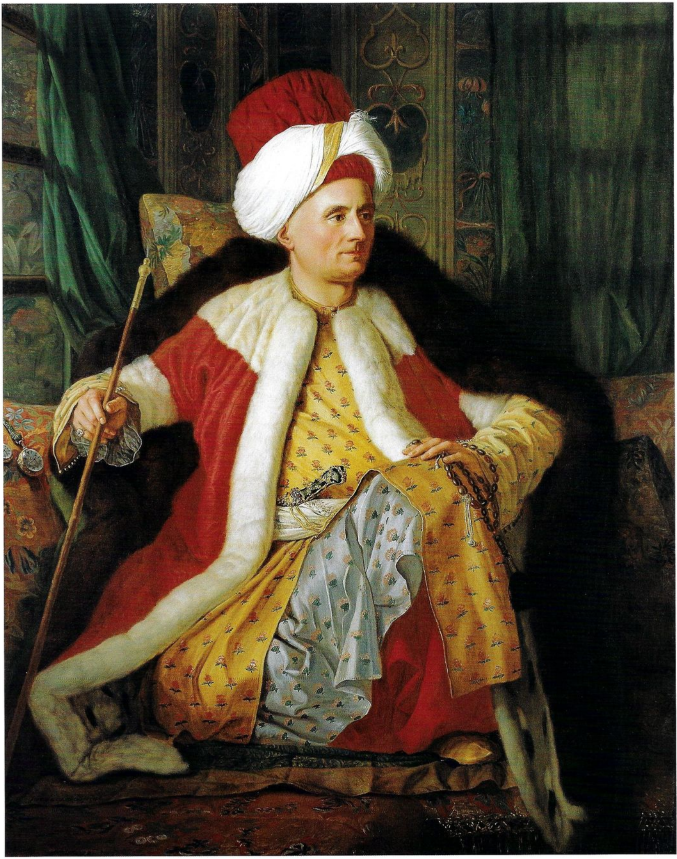
TURQUERIE
An Eighteenth-Century European Fantasy
Haydn Williams
Thames & Hudson, £39.95

A Dutch mastiff with a languid gaze sits upon a plump velvet cushion. He holds a silken handkerchief aloft with one paw, while the other delicately supports a gold and crystal pipe. A miniature turban, fawning female spaniels, a black cat (doubling as a eunuch), and soft smoke rising from the pug's mouth complete Jean-Baptiste Oudry's curious painting *The Mastiff's Seraglio* (1734). It is certainly the most playful of the many fascinating and inventive expressions of *turquerie* that populate Haydn Williams's engaging study. It also illustrates the elasticity of the Ottoman world in the imagination of European artists, architects and craftsmen.



Anne Testa, née Viviers, painted by Antoine de Favray in 1768, the year she married the Comte de Vergennes, France's envoy to Istanbul. The couple scandalised Pera society by living together openly for years and having two children before their marriage

SUNA AND INAN KIRAÇ FOUNDATION ORIENTALIST PAINTING COLLECTION



SUNA AND INAN KIRAÇ FOUNDATION ORIENTALIST PAINTING COLLECTION

The topic of *turquerie* is a nebulous one. Williams opens by stating: "Turquerie was not a style; rather it was a theme that in the course of the 18th century sparked varied responses in different places."

This is reflected in the book's thematic structure: Williams writes for a broad audience rather than producing a comprehensive survey of this vast and fluid subject. He illustrates the eclectic and interconnected nature of European responses to Ottoman culture, with the emphasis placed on France and the 18th century. Examples from other centuries and locations are judiciously incorporated, and they serve to underline the pan-European nature of this phenomenon.

Portraits of turbaned princes and merchants feature strongly, but the author gives equal prominence to Turkish allusions in European theatre, balls and masquerades, garden follies and the decorative arts. This inclusive panorama is particularly welcome, and it illustrates the inherent malleability of Ottoman culture as a source of inspiration and model of imitation.

The taste for things Turkish ranged from the minute to the monumental: Ottoman characters adorned snuffboxes and sewing kits, flowerpots and sugar boxes; crescent moons were twisted to decorate chairs, and figures of enslaved Turks propped up the beds of European princes.

Equally, *turquerie* found expression in the erection of Ottoman-style tents, kiosks and mock mosques. A striking example is the late-18th-century mosque and court constructed at Schloss Schwetzingen in southern Germany for the Elector Palatine Karl Theodor. Painted a bold pink, it blends European and Islamic forms in a curious style: ogee arches with Corinthian columns, and onion domes topped with gilded crescents.

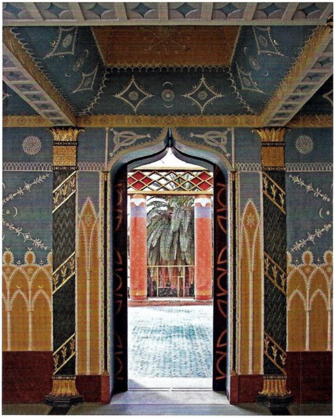
LEFT THE COMTE DE VERGENNES IN ORIENTAL DRESS, 1766. DE FAVRAY PORTRAYS THE FRENCH ENVOY AS A SHREWD OBSERVER. FRANCE WAS KEEN FOR THE SULTAN TO GO TO WAR WITH RUSSIA. VERGENNES RIGHTLY SENSED DISASTER
TOP THE 'SALON TURC' AT THE VILLA FAVORITA, PALERMO, C1814
RIGHT THE EMPRESS JOSEPHINE CREATED THIS 'CABINET TURC' IN HER SON'S HOUSE IN PARIS. NAPOLEON WAS APPALLED: 'IT IS ABSURD TO HAVE SPENT 1,500,000 FRANCS ON SUCH A SMALL HOUSE – I HAVE TO PUT A STOP TO IT'

Many of these elements are not exclusively Ottoman quotations, but they serve to illustrate the gradual blurring of *turquerie* into the more homogenous mode of Orientalism. The East becomes a tangle of pagodas and parrots, Chinamen with porcelain bowls and Indian ladies playing musical instruments. In one corner, the Ottoman sultan is shown on horseback and flanked by janissaries. The iconography is familiar, probably drawn from earlier costume books, but the context is novel: the sultan is simply one of many movable pieces in an ever-fantastical East.

The emphasis of this study is firmly on European responses to Ottoman culture, but there are hints at exchange operating the other way. One intriguing example is a porcelain rosewater ewer and basin produced in Vienna (c1735). This object carefully imitates traditional Turkish ewers in its form, but the decoration is unmistakably a European rendering of Oriental motifs. It provides eloquent testimony to the complexities of *turquerie*, particularly when one considers that this ewer was created for 18th-century Ottoman dignitaries; it remains part of the Topkapı collection to this day.

The great value of this work is in its scope. An impressive range of material is covered, with excellent illustrations adorning almost every page. However, there are moments where detail is sacrificed for breadth, and inevitably a brisk pace is adopted, with certain examples described all too fleetingly. The light footnoting used throughout also makes it difficult for the reader to explore individual items in further detail.

Above all, this is a beautifully crafted book: Williams writes clearly and engagingly, and many of the exquisite reproductions are complete with perceptive captions. The rich visual survey of *turquerie* cannot fail to excite and educate a wide readership about the imaginative capital of the Ottoman world.


VILLA FAVORITA, PALERMO, PHOTO DARIO DI VINCENZO

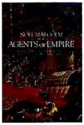
HÔTEL DE BEAUHARNAIS, PHOTO MARC WALTER

SPHERES OF INFLUENCE

Norman Stone

AGENTS OF EMPIRE
Knights, Corsairs, Jesuits and Spies in the Sixteenth-Century Mediterranean World

Noel Malcolm
Allen Lane, £30



In modern times, Albania has counted as the least-known and the weirdest country in Europe – the Pluto of a solar system based on France. The language is Indo-European – *deux-trois-quatre* is *dy-tre-kater* – but its branch is old and remote. For decades after 1945 it had a sort of Lilliputian Stalinism, in the end with a doctrinal purity that isolated it even from China; Norwegian Trotskyists who went there in 1984 found that their beards had to be shorn at the border, because a main point to the ideology was hostility to Islam, and all religions.

Eric Newby's *On the Shores of the Mediterranean* has a very funny account of his visit there. The place was officially godless and at odds with all neighbours, especially Yugoslavia. This was an extraordinary diversion from the country's past, because historically Albanians had had a huge buccaneering presence, and had been especially important both to Venice and to the Ottoman Empire, to which they had supplied more high officials, including the Egyptian dynasty, than any other element.

Writing the history of Albania is not easy. The sources are in difficult languages, and the focus is complicated. Outside powers were intimately involved – Greece, Serbia and Italy in modern times, Ottoman Turkey and Austria-Hungary before that (the last place where the Habsburg Double-Eagle standard flew, in 1919, was at the headquarters of General von Pflanzer-Baltin in Vlorë, known at the time by its Italian name, Valona).

Noel Malcolm does not attempt a general history, but proceeds from a set of miniatures that soon turns panoramic – an original approach that is also very successful. He writes from the viewpoint of an Albanian family that underwent all the vicissitudes of the later 16th century, when Albania was well and truly on the map. The 16th century went in for vicissitudes, and the Mediterranean was their epicentre; Albania, on the frontier of two great empires – the maritime Venetian and the world-power Ottoman – acquired an importance that she has not held since.

The book centres on two families, the Bruti and the Bruni, who were related, and were originally patricians in an Adriatic town, then called Dulcigno, now Ulcinj, on the borders of Montenegro and Albania. The Dalmatian coast was studded with port towns, run at some remove by the Venetian "Sea State" and still very obviously Venetian in their architecture. Ulcinj, like its neighbours Bar (Antivari) and Budva, had a period of prosperity, trading with Ottoman Turkey (grain, rather than the far better-known spices, was the main item), and the small patrician element did well. But in 1571 the Venetians were caught up in Othello's war, losing Cyprus, and also losing Ulcinj.

Our Venetian-Albanians took refuge in Capodistria (now Koper, in Slovene Istria) and over the next two decades became involved in almost all of the great engagements of the era. Some of them took Ottoman service and converted: when Ulcinj fell, the commanders on that side were ex-Christians and later, when a treaty with the Habsburgs was signed, it turned out that all concerned were Hungarians.

The grand vizier who dominates these pages was Sokollu Mehmet, a Bosnian Serb (I had thought Croat, but stand corrected: Noel Malcolm does not get such things wrong), and the Brunis profited from a close blood relationship with influential Ottomans, on whose help they could call (hence their usefulness in the roles suggested by the book's title, as spies and slave-ransomers in Constantinople).

Much later on, Turkish nationalists complained that the empire had been taken over by these wily and treacherous cliques – but they themselves often had foreign mothers, and a chief propagator of the de-Ottomanisation of the Turkish language was himself a Jew, Avram Galanti. Turks nowadays can thank the good Lord that they are not Arabs, and a good reason for that is that they were and are much more open to foreign influences, whatever the grumbling.

Noel Malcolm argues that in this era, though in theory there was a war going on between Cross and Crescent, the Pope took all that much more seriously than did the Ottomans, who tended to forget about Holy War whenever there was a chance of a profit. Sultan Süleyman used to eat his lunch in public during Ramazan to show his janissaries that you cannot win battles if you fast between sunup and sundown. In the same way, the Ottomans of the great period well understood that if you try to run an empire without alcohol, you can forget it. For a good two centuries now there has been a direct correlation between strict observance of Islamic rules and general backwardness. Why this should be so is the great question of our times. Parallel to it is another.

> *Though in theory there was a war going on between Cross and Crescent, the Pope took all that much more seriously than did the Ottomans*

Noel Malcolm quite rightly puts the entire story in the context of the Counter-Reformation, and has some very good pages on the 18-year Council of Trent, which reinvigorated the Catholic Church, Jesuits and all, who subjected themselves to ferocious fasting and flagellation to fulfil their vow of chastity. The popes now took the lead in cobbling together Holy Leagues, getting the Knights of Malta (of whom a Bruni was one, though getting his quarterings of nobility through took an epic of pointless research). To cooperate with the ever-suspicious Philip II of Spain and the ever-reluctant Venetians took a vast effort, the more so as the Knights of Malta hijacked grain ships. This was a contest that went all through Mediterranean Europe, from Morocco to Malta and even remote Moldavia, with Brunis involved everywhere, and in the book there is even a chapter on a Bruni who held a papal fortress in Avignon against the Huguenots, and one who became adviser to the princes of Moldavia, negotiating their relations with Poland.

The saddest tale is that of a Bruni who had been archbishop of Bar, and whom the Turkish admiral (another convert) who had taken the place never forgave, because he had resisted. The archbishop was made a galley slave when his ship was boarded by Spanish soldiers, who just killed galley slaves in search of their pathetic belongings. His own brother was in a ship just yards away.

Noel Malcolm remarked somewhere that whatever else you might say about British writing in the past 50 years, there has been some distinguished history, better than anywhere else. Roger Crowley's *City of Fortune*, on Venice, is a case in point; and his *Conquerors*, on the Portuguese empire in Asia, is another testimony to the amazing energy of these 16th-century Europeans. Noel Malcolm's own linguistic capacity is in itself panoramic, and he must count as the successor of Steven Runciman.

Norman Stone's books include 'Turkey: A Short History' (Thames & Hudson, 2010) and 'World War Two: A Short History' (Allen Lane, 2013)

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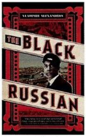
Charles King
WW Norton, £18.99

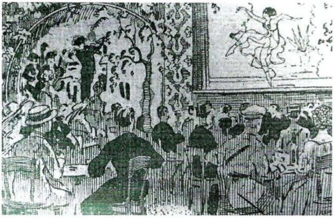
PLAYSHIPS OF THE WORLD The Naval Diaries of Admiral Dan Gallery, 1920–1924

Edited by Robert Shenk
University of South Carolina, £31.50



In the years 1914–18, Istanbul's population shrank by a half. Crippled by occupation and the relocation of the capital to Ankara, the city had changed from one of the world's greatest imperial metropolises to a crumbling and forgotten city not far from the Greek border. The well-known cliché of the city as a bridge between continents rang false – this was a city on a fault line, a hangover from the complexities of the Ottoman Empire that did not quite fit into the clean modernist lines of Atatürk's republic. The President himself would not even revisit the city until 1927. In the words of the early Republican publication *La Turquie Kémaliste,* the best thing for a visitor wanting to understand the contemporary country to do was to "take the first train to Ankara".

That the interwar period was a dark and uneasy one in Istanbul is often forgotten. The sweeping reforms undertaken by Atatürk took time to stick, and moving the capital had spelt economic catastrophe for many of the city's inhabitants, in particular the bureaucrats of the *ancien régime*, who were left out of the Gazi's brave new world.



Three recent books have this period of Istanbul's history in their sights, each in a slightly different way drawing on its astonishing richness and complexity. The end of the Great War had ushered in an atmosphere of fervid excitement across Europe, and Istanbul was no stranger to the drastic changes to urban life this entailed. Yet in Istanbul the joys of peace were tempered by the instability and anxieties of the time. This was a world far away from the cosmopolitanism so loved by the city's eulogists.

Vladimir Alexandrov's masterly *The Black Russian* tells the astonishing story of Frederick Bruce Thomas, an African-American nightclub impresario who made his way from his birthplace in Mississippi to antebellum Moscow, before fleeing the Soviets with the tide of White Russians who ended up in Istanbul in 1919. Alexandrov follows his subject in forensic detail and, in so doing, sheds a great deal of light on the plight of many of the Russians who made the city their home. Thomas was a dab hand at creating nightclubs, but his Istanbul chapter makes for sad reading. Establishment after establishment folded and even after experiencing some success with his club Maxim, chased out of Istanbul by his debtors, he ended up in the still-provincial capital of Ankara, destitute, imprisoned for bad debts.

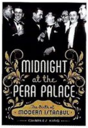
Thomas had always been a curious feature in accounts of the city in the period, often credited with bringing jazz to the city – a claim that is certainly overstated. Yet the White Russian influx of which he was a part did have an important and lasting impact on the city in meeting the increasing need, both from soldiers garrisoned there and from the local population, for jazz music. Raucous accounts of Thomas's clubs, with their bands of African-American musicians and polyglot audiences, fill Alexandrov's book: "the gaiety, the din of the Jazz band, the dazzling luxury, the women amidst beautifully appointed tables decorated with flowers and crystal".

In Istanbul, as elsewhere, jazz emerged as the music of the destitute, picked up by the wealthy keen to slum it. For the motley crew of artists and musicians thrown up by the post-war tide in Istanbul this was certainly the case.

YAPI KREDİ SELAHATTİN GİZ COLLECTION

Above Selahattin Giz's nostalgic 1940s photograph of Istanbul women walking across the Galata Bridge in the snow, with the Yeni Cami beyond (from 'Midnight at the Pera Palace')

Opposite from top A White Russian club in Istanbul, possibly the Anglo-American Garden Villa in Şişli, also known as the Stella, opened by the nightclub impresario Frederick Bruce Thomas in 1919; Thomas in Paris, c1896 This page, top right The Galata Bridge in Thomas's day (all from 'The Black Russian')

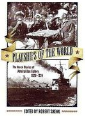


The excellent and timely *Midnight at the Pera Palace*, by Charles King, goes for a wider view, offering a fascinating take on the period and the characters that passed through the city. Each chapter explores a theme or a specific story, in chronological order, telling many of the best-known tales of the period (several of which have been told in the pages of Cornucopia) – those of Trotsky, Nâzım Hikmet, Halide Edip Adıvar and Pope John XXIII – as well as more surprising accounts of such figures as the first Turkish Miss World. Each presents us with an alluring snapshot of a lost city, "the principal storm centre for Europe and Asia", with its beauty pageants and spies, exiles and music-makers.

King is at his best when the narrative moves beyond Istanbul and ties the city into the wider context of the interwar world – *rebetiko* in Athens and New York; the arrival of the Russians; the complex and contorted games of espionage that shocked the city. Yet the somewhat anecdotal nature of the chapters can occasionally hinder this bigger picture, even as they give the book a playful and delicate charm. In particular, the story of the American scholar and archaeologist Thomas Whittemore, in all his well-connected and eccentric glory, is elegantly told.

King's eccentric and alluring characters, such as Whittemore and Frederick Thomas, paint a vivid picture of the interwar years in Istanbul, but the clientele of the Pera Palace and the habitués of Maxim give us just one perspective of the city's story.

A third, less recent book, *Playships of the World: The Naval Diaries of Admiral Dan Gallery, 1920–1924*, while maintaining a similar perspective, crystallises some of the issues thrown up by writing on this period.



Dan Gallery was a young naval officer when his ship, the *USS Pittsburgh*, docked in the Bosphorus in November 1922, as part of the occupying forces. His tales of high jinks in the seedy bars of Pera/Beyoğlu and his amorous affairs with local girls make for fun and revealing reading: "Maxim's was navy headquarters ashore and an old navy party was thrown there. No one else had a chance in there. We had a goat on hand, got the score by quarters, gave all the yells, took possession of the orchestra and played Anchors Aweigh, got gloriously drunk, smashed up the furniture, had snake dances, and celebrated the occasion with all due ceremonies." Yet each night Gallery returns to his warship. While we relish his fun, Gallery, like so many of the foreigners in Istanbul, almost oblivious of the torments of its population, strolled around the city as part of an occupying force.

From Waugh to Scott Fitzgerald, the bright figures of excess in 1920s Europe and America juxtapose themselves with the darkening clouds of poverty and unrest. The same was true in Istanbul. The Great Depression deepened the decline brought on by the occupation and the moving of the capital. And the bright stories of nightclubs and beauty pageants were the exceptions, not the rule. For all the glitz and glamour, underlying these three books is the story of a great city dethroned, in crisis.

A ROOM WITH A VIEW

Glamorous Loft Suites in the Swissôtel The Bosphorus Istanbul's restyled West Wing bring high-life loft living to the shores of the Turkish metropolis. Conceived by the celebrated interior designer Khuan Chew of KCA International, they fuse the very best of Swiss sophistication, precision and simplicity with the warmth of Turkish culture. In Chew's new contemporary look, with the emphasis on floor-to-ceiling windows in every room and suite, a shimmering Bosphorus forms the backdrop to exquisite design.

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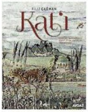
CUTTING EDGE

Tim Stanley

KAT‘I: Cut Paper Works and Artists in the Ottoman World

Filiz Çağman
Aygaz Yayınları, TL200



In the 15th century, at the Islamic courts of Central Asia and the Middle East, the arts and crafts involved in making manuscripts reached a peak of virtuosity that set the standard for centuries to come. Gracious calligraphy was written in dark-hued ink on paper of fine quality; elegant illumination was added in bright colours and gold; and, once the quires had been assembled, the book was bound in exquisite leather covers.

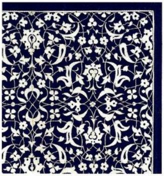
One impressive feature of luxury bindings of the 15th century is the delicate and beautifully composed patterns in leather filigree, or cut-outs. These were placed against paper of a contrasting colour to form the linings of the covers. Great skill and care were needed to cut the design into the leather in a way that allowed the voids to be removed without damaging the thin connecting elements in the pattern, which was ideally formed in a single piece. During this period the same skills were applied to paper, creating works of art that, if anything, are even more impressive.

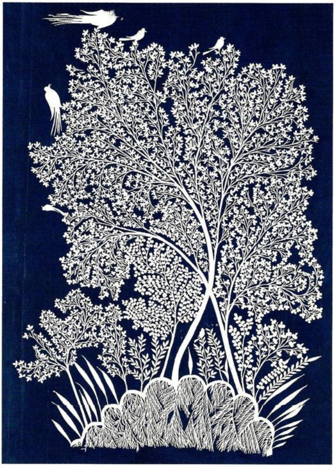
At first sight, a page of calligraphy appears to have been written in opaque coloured pigments against a dark ground, which is itself a difficult effect to achieve with a pen. On much closer inspection it becomes clear that the script has been cut out of paper and stuck onto the page so that the letters are positioned exactly as they would have been if written in ink. The exhausting nature of this work can be guessed at from the fact that most texts copied in this way are relatively short.

The shortest pieces, single pages of calligraphy executed as paper cut-outs, are now mostly found in albums, where they are sometimes accompanied by paper cut-outs of another sort: these are full-page designs, such as intricate arabesque patterns or trees populated with small birds, cut out in paper of one colour and set against a page of another, dark on light, or light on dark. They can be of stunning complexity and fineness.

The greatest store of these paper cuts is the Topkapı Palace library in Istanbul, and the principal librarian there for many years – until she retired a decade ago – was Filiz Çağman. With this book, Çağman has taken a little-studied technique that has always hovered on the margins of specialists' awareness, making a wide range of examples, all beautifully reproduced, available to everyone.

In *Kat‘i*, which itself has a handsome cut-out of trees on the flyleaf, Çağman has illustrated the way the technique, developed in other centres in the 15th century, found a home at the Ottoman court in Istanbul in the 16th. Remarkable examples were produced, especially calligraphic ones. By the early 17th century, the court had begun to lose interest; cut-outs of variable quality were produced on a commercial basis, and albums in the British Museum and the Bibliothèque Nationale de France show that they were made for foreign visitors as curiosities to take home.





Intricate Akkoyunlu Türkmen cut-paper art in the Topkapi's palace albums, made in Tabriz in the later 15th century

Towards the end of the 17th century this art form, like many others, came back to life through the work of such artists as Nakşî of Edirne and Hala-zade Mehmed Efendi. Nakşî's work includes pieces of double virtuosity – calligraphy cut-outs in which each line of text appears against a background of dense floral scrollwork in a contrasting colour, both displayed against a much darker background. Their work formed the basis for a further development of paper cut-outs in the 18th century.

Complex paper cuts were produced that showed part of a flower garden or a landscape, and these then gave way to three-dimensional landscapes, mostly views of identifiable Istanbul beauty spots from the sea, or views out to sea from such places. In particular, these were fitted into glazed recesses on the sides of writing boxes that seem to have been presented to the reigning sultan. Although the colours have usually faded, especially on the exterior of the boxes, they can be admired for their charm and for the skill shown by their makers. They can also be compared with other visual sources to reconstruct the appearance of lost buildings.

The story continues to the present century. The artist Nermin Er has already used the cut-out technique to striking effect in a series of works that are completely contemporary in content. Paper cut-outs were famously made by Henri Matisse towards the end of his life, but, striking and popular as they are, the Turkish work in this medium, produced over more than five centuries, can still hold its own, astonishing us with its complexity and delicacy.

Tim Stanley is Senior Curator for the Middle Eastern collections at the Victoria and Albert Museum

FORCES OF NATURE

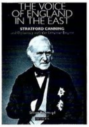
David Barchard

THE VOICE OF ENGLAND IN THE EAST
Stratford Canning and Diplomacy with the Ottoman Empire

Steven Richmond
IB Tauris, £62

TURKEY, ISLAM, NATIONALISM, AND MODERNITY
A History, 1789–2007

Carter Vaughn Findley
Yale University Press, $40



The outpouring of grief and respect at the funeral of Viscount Stratford de Redcliffe (better known by his earlier name of Stratford Canning) after his death in 1880 at the age of 93 is probably unparalleled in British diplomatic history. Preaching at Canning's funeral, Dean Stanley, one of the foremost Anglican clergyman of his age, told the congregation and the world: "No one could hear the name of Stratford Canning named through the Far East without feeling that so long as he retained his post the honour of England was safe..." Canning, even in old age, was a Victorian Titan, and within a few years there was a statue of him (the first ever for a British diplomat) in Westminster Abbey.

Of course, this was not the whole story. Canning's death merited a leader in *The Times* which pointed out that, alongside his diplomatic triumphs, "he had few of the characteristics usually associated with successful diplomacy. [He was] Proud, reserved, imperious, austere, fierce in temper, direct and uncompromising in speech, rigid and haughty in nature", in short a "diplomatic autocrat".

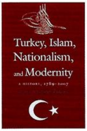
A workaholic, Canning's output was vast and long-winded. In 1843, looking at a large packet of his dispatches, Queen Victoria remarked with dismay: "He has always so much to say it is sometimes most alarming."

Perhaps not surprisingly Canning has got the better of several biographers. His official biography in the 1890s was detailed but too uncritical and, worse still, his biographer somehow managed to lose Canning's autobiography. Several 20th-century lives added little or nothing to our picture of him. Allen Cunningham, perhaps the outstanding 20th-century scholar of Anglo-Ottoman relations, came to dislike Canning so much that he was unable to complete the biography he planned, leaving only a series of penetrating, elegant chapters to be edited after his death by colleagues.

Steven Richmond's elegant and lucid account of five key periods in Canning's long career between 1808, when he arrived in Turkey for the first time at the age of 22, and 1858, when he finally departed, aged 72, after six terms in the country, can be warmly recommended, especially for those who are not already steeped in the intricacies of 19th-century diplomatic history. Richmond deserves praise for being both scholarly and accessible.

Richmond is not one of Canning's debunkers. An opening chapter discusses "the Stratford Legend", assessing the ups and downs of his reputation over the past 150 years. The greater part of what follows is concerned with the first half of Stratford's career up to 1832, the period when he was still largely philhellene in spirit. The latter – and more important – phase, from 1842 to 1858, when Stratford was a dominant political figure in Turkey, receives briefer treatment, which is a pity, but the ambassador's controversial role on the eve of and during the Crimean War is carefully examined. One would have liked to hear more on some topics, particularly Canning's work and friendship with the first Westernising reformer, Mustafa Reshid Pasha, and his view of the tangled politics of the Ottoman palace in the early 1850s.

Still, this is both an illuminating analysis and an elegant introduction, and one which sticks firmly on Canning's side. It is a little sad that at a cost of £62 this book will probably not reach the wider readership it deserves. Is it perhaps a first sketch for a larger project? One hopes so.



Professor Carter Findley's vast survey of the forces which carried Turkey through to modernity between 1789 and 2007 runs to 500 pages, is lavishly illustrated, and bears comparison with Bernard Lewis's classic account of *The Emergence of Modern Turkey*, attempting to give a "panoramic perspective on political, economic, social and cultural history unfolding across two centuries" and explaining why Turkey's life has been dominated by rival secularising and Islamising currents.

Findley's extraordinary knowledge of Turkish society and especially, perhaps, literature enables him to go into detail on topics which elude most writers. There is a detailed section on Orhan Pamuk, for example, but also on the Khalidi Naqshbandi movement.

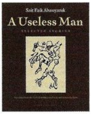
Given its length and detail, this is not the sort of book to be read at a single sitting, but one to be dipped into frequently, thought about, and learnt from. Unfortunately, the story ends in 2007, just when Turkish society was about to take an unforeseen radical new turn. One wonders if today Findley would still write that "Islamically committed statesmen not only recaptured power. They also excelled the secular nationalists in recognising the value of a religiously neutral government as a guarantor of pluralism." But this book provides a rich and full view of Turkish history hard to find elsewhere.

FIGURES IN A LANDSCAPE

Roger Norman

A USELESS MAN
Selected Stories by Sait Faik Abasıyanık

Translated by Maureen Freely and Alexander Dawe
Archipelago Books, £12.99



The first dozen or so stories of *A Useless Man* are marvellous. There is a charm, a freshness, a poignancy in these tales and reminiscences (it's hard to distinguish between the two) which is touching and delightful. There are extraordinary passages seen through the lens of childhood. The boy's letter to his father, from *Hairspring*, comes to mind, but *On Spoon Island* also rings with the unlikely truths of a child's world, and the experience of the son in *My Father's Second House* is magnificently told.

The stories are set in times that now seem remote – old crooked, crowded Istanbul, and the nearby island of Burgazada, where Sait Faik spent most of his short life (1908–54). With a few exceptions – the snow-covered garden of an Istanbul coffee house, a room in a village homestead – he is less concerned with place than with mood, often conveyed by the winds (which are always named and several times listed, with an islander's obvious pleasure). As he writes in his last story, "It's people who bring beauty into a landscape…", otherwise "it's just a landscape, silent and badly painted". His people remain most vividly in the mind – the young girl in *The Bohça*, the tremendous Bayram in *Valley of the Violets*, the boy-thief in *The Silk Handkerchief*, the array of odd characters running coffee shops. Istanbul, usually at night, often rainy or cold, is nothing without its people, their ways and their manners. The dialogues are masterly – most of them apparently remembered, not imagined. Children address each other with miraculous inventiveness and, among adults, there's an unsentimental (but still artful) straightforwardness, without the polite packaging familiar to the Anglo-Saxon world. People say what they mean or keep quiet.

Halfway through the book the tone changes, the perspective alters. The writer grows more conscious of himself and of the work of writing. He can write stories under trees, on rocks, or balanced on one foot, he claims, but by the time he sets it down one feels it is no longer quite true. We become aware of the writer writing. We learn of the struggles with booze, the pettiness of the islanders, the failures of love. Turkey itself had changed in the years between *The Samovar* (1936) and *A Serpent in Alemdağ* (1953) – on the way to abandoning a simpler and more satisfying existence perhaps – but there's also a new edginess or grumpiness in the writer himself. One late story pillories the island scandalmonger, and in another a trapper of small birds is trapped by the author and squashed underfoot in a piece closer to polemic than story. Such people no doubt deserve it, but the grace has gone from the writing, as it had from Hemingway's later stories.

My surprise and delight at the enigmatic and seemingly effortless stories of the first dozen years gave way to sadness as there emerged the picture of a man whose extraordinary talent could not save him from despair. He went on writing but it was no fun any more (*A Cloud in the Sky*; *I Can't Go into Town*; *The Boy on the Tünel*). The friends and fellows seemed to have dispersed. He was drinking too much, and it killed him.

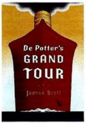
Neither the reviewers nor the excellent translators of *A Useless Man* (in their Afterword) remark on this sense of literary paradise lost. I hope I am mistaken.

DOUBLE LIVES

Robert Ousterhout

DE POTTER'S GRAND TOUR

Joanna Scott
Farrar, Straus and Giroux, £17.99



I used to say every good story needs a German villain – which everyone but my German friends found amusing. This was certainly the case, I discovered, in the sad saga of the American traveller, archaeologist and photographer John Henry Haynes and his nemesis, Hermann Volrath Hilprecht, at the excavations in the Sumerian site of Nippur (1889–1900).

Hilprecht was one of those Europeans who reinvented himself in late-19th-century America, ultimately as professor of Assyriology at the University of Pennsylvania and director of the expedition to Nippur. Never mind that he rarely set foot in Mesopotamia and that Haynes did all the work – Hilprecht got all the credit, and Haynes got fired. Matters came to a head in 1905 when Hilprecht was accused of "literary dishonesty" (faking his results) and left the university in disgrace.

The episode entangled Osman Hamdi Bey, his brother Halil Eldem, the Ottoman Imperial Museum and a variety of others – and could still make a rousing Hollywood blockbuster. The larger saga provided a compelling backstory for two exhibitions: *Archaeologists and Travelers in Ottoman Lands* at the Penn Museum (Philadelphia) in 2010–11, and its successor, *Osman Hamdi Bey and the Americans* at the Pera Museum (Istanbul) in 2011–12.

The novelist Joanna Scott's latest book, *De Potter's Grand Tour*, recounts a parallel tale, similarly involving a transplanted foreigner, reinvention and fakery, museums, art collections and excavations. In this instance, the remade European, Armand De Potter, was the author's great-grandfather.

As a learned European gentleman, he had amassed a fortune devising and leading overpriced Grand Tours for well-heeled Americans. He settled his family in a villa on the French Riviera and transformed his devoted wife from pedestrian Amy into exotic Aimée. But then in 1905, at the height of his career, De Potter disappeared mysteriously off the coast of Greece, leaving his distraught wife with an unclaimed steamer trunk, a mountain of debt and a family mystery.

A century later his great-granddaughter – distinguished novelist, MacArthur Fellow and professor of English at the University of Rochester – reopened the case, determined to write a biography of the mysterious Armand De Potter. The more she researched the more difficult it became, however, for nothing was as it seemed. De Potter had misrepresented himself to his wife and family with a fabricated personal history, pedigree and education. He was neither an aristocrat nor a doctor of letters, and he was not, as he had claimed, a Knight of the Order of Melusine. Moreover, his finances were in arrears and his business a house of cards. His prized collection of antiquities, for the most part illegally acquired, turned out to be a motley assemblage of fakes, forgeries and misidentifications. The "De Potter Collection", exhibited from 1898 to 1908 at the Penn Museum, was summarily dismissed by the curators as not worth the space it occupied, and eventually his widow sold it all to the Brooklyn Museum for a pittance.

By all accounts De Potter was a showman, a mesmerising presence, adored by family, community and wealthy clients alike. But, as his lecture notes reveal, he was no scholar. And though he was a fanatical collector, he was not a connoisseur. Much of his fortune had been squandered to support his collection of antiquities, which he offered to the Penn Museum. In return he had hoped for personal recognition – his name on a bronze plaque, perhaps an honorary degree, for he had long styled himself "Professor". But this was not to be.

As Joanna Scott discovered as she attempted to massage the meagre evidence into a biography, there was simply too much missing at the core. De Potter refused to come into sharp focus. Then in 2010 she visited the Penn Museum, hoping to find something – anything – in the archives. She came away disappointed. Desperate to leave the museum as quickly as possible, she lost her way – and fortuitously stumbled into the *Archaeologists and Travelers in Ottoman Lands* exhibition.

She recounts how she spent the rest of the day there, marvelling at the coincidence of events in the lives of De Potter and those figures at the centre of that exhibition: Hilprecht, Haynes and Hamdi Bey. She didn't find a smoking gun, but she did find a letter, written by Hilprecht from Constantinople on June 8, 1905 – which was also De Potter's last day in the city before he boarded the fatal steamer and disappeared for ever. As Scott relates, "While I didn't find the absolute solution to the mystery of Armand's disappearance, I found something else… stories that ignited my sputtering imagination."

As she imagined De Potter's final days and ultimate fate, and her book transformed from non-fiction to fiction, Constantinople took centre stage. Next to its name on that final, fatal itinerary, Aimée had scrawled, "*pays de malheur!*" What could have happened in Constantinople to lead De Potter to disappear so completely? While not giving anything away, to my utter delight Hermann V

Hilprecht appears at this critical point in the story. As Scott discovered, he is the archetypal German villain, and I can only hope he has a great future in historical fiction.

But Armand De Potter still refused to come into focus. As a consequence, Aimée assumes a larger role in the narrative and the novel becomes something of a love story and a meditation on her devotion to her husband, both before and long after his disappearance. We are left with no answer as to what happened to him: suicide, accident, intentional disappearance? We view the possibilities through Aimée's eyes as, over the years, she fears, imagines and yearns. Did she ever really know him? In the end, her imaginative reconstructions of her husband merge with those of the author.

Robert Ousterhout teaches at the University of Pennsylvania and is the author of 'John Henry Haynes: A Photographer and Archaeologist in the Ottoman Empire, 1881–1900' (Cornucopia Books, £20)

TRAVELS WITH MY CAIQUE

Rupert Scott

KAPTAN JUNE MAKES WAVES

June Haimoff
Published privately, TL45

KAPTAN JUNE
MAKES WAVES
JUNE HAIMOFF

Readers lucky enough to have come across June Haimoff's earlier books – *Kaptan June and the Turtles* (1997) and *Breakfasts with Kaptan June* (2005) – will already be familiar with the author's pre-war childhood, and with her heroic – and eventually successful – battles against large hotel developments on the Turkish coast near Dalyan in the 1980s and 1990s. Her latest book, *Kaptan June Makes Waves*, tells us about the years in between, from the 1940s to the 1980s.

Above all, this is the story of her decade as owner of *Bouboulina*, a 12-metre caique bought in 1970 from four brothers in Thassos, following a marathon negotiation involving a lot of ouzo and cigarettes. She describes *Bouboulina* unflatteringly as "resembling a pregnant banana", but she was clearly a lovely boat of the kind we have all dreamed of owning at one time or another.

Bouboulina is neither grand nor particularly comfortable, but she sees June safely though terrifying storms in the Taranto Channel and the Saronic Gulf. She is equally at ease in the remote bays of the Cyclades and the yacht clubs of Greece, Italy and Turkey. Over many happy summers she takes June all over the Greek islands, from verdant Corfu to the rocky Dodecanese.

Reading this book is to step into the enchanted world of the Aegean and Ionian in the decades after the Second World War. Life is absurdly cheap, the locals charming and frequently beautiful, the food delicious. And it is all a long, long way from drab, grey, austerity-bound Britain.

June's adventures in the Aegean began in 1947 with her first husband, Percy Sutton, whose motor patrol craft *Naidas* was a converted naval vessel. Her second husband, Charles Haimoff, was no fan of the sea or of Greece, so her companion on *Bouboulina* through most of the 1970s is Hamsi, a Swiss Adonis 25 years her junior.

June's summers are an idyll of sunshine, siestas, picnics, swimming and more swimming, lived among an enviably large cast of international friends. The winters are spent in Gstaad, where she wins the Ladies' Race at the Eagle Club and is awarded the David Niven Cup.

By the late 1970s the skies begin to darken, as money becomes tight and the relationship with Hamsi ends. Eventually *Bouboulina* is sold to a Canadian couple in Rhodes. June feels intense sorrow at her loss, and the reader shares that pain.

But much worse is to come. June loses her home in Gstaad and the following year her adored daughter, Claire, dies in an accident in Geneva. The idyll turns into a tragedy.

But if ever a cloud had a silver lining, it was on this occasion. For with no boat and no home and heartbroken from personal loss, in 1984 June embarked on a completely new episode in her life. She began to spend her summers in Turkey, in the simple *baraka* (wooden hut) on İztuzu, a remote beach near the mouth of the Dalyan river, about 50 kilometres east of Marmaris, which she described so vividly in *Kaptan June and the Turtles*.

Realising that the beach was a nesting ground for turtles, and that construction of a huge new hotel was imminent, she found a renewed sense of purpose as a campaigner protecting the local environment. And her achievement was sensational. Largely through her courage and energy, the hotel project was cancelled and İztuzu Beach and its turtles were saved. This was an extraordinary achievement in a country where the environmental lobby was still weak. Now aged 92, this remarkable woman still makes Turkey her home, and has rightly been honoured both in Turkey and in the UK. ◆

Rupert Scott is the editor of 'Turkish Coast Through Writers' Eyes' (Eland, £12.99)

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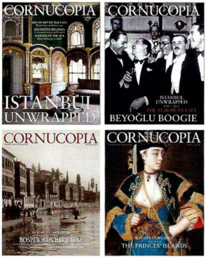

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THE GRANDEST VIZIER

FEW STATESMEN OF THE TURBULENT LAST YEARS OF THE OTTOMAN EMPIRE CAN HAVE HELD MORE ILLUSTRIOUS TITLES – AT A LESS AUSPICIOUS TIME – THAN THE DIMINUTIVE KÜÇÜK SAİD PASHA. DAVID BARCHARD LOOKS BACK OVER THE EVENTFUL AND CHEQUERED CAREER OF A MAN OF MANY PARTS

On the evening of August 31, 1877, the day before the first anniversary of Abdülhamid II's accession to the Ottoman throne, the British ambassador of the day, Henry Layard, and his wife attended a private dinner with the Sultan. Only four people were present: the fourth being Mehmed Said Bey, the Imperial private secretary, who sat opposite Layard.

Knowing that Said was "marked for advancement", the ambassador eyed him closely. "He had an intelligent but somewhat truculent countenance and bright sparkling eyes which were usually downcast," Layard wrote. "This was the first time I had met him and he made a very unfavourable impression on me, more for his manner and appearance than anything else."

It was the debut of an international career which would see Said – or Küçük Said (Little Said) as he has gone down in the history books – become grand vizier eight times, spend a decade in the wilderness, and eventually become an elder statesman in the turbulent multi-party politics of Turkey's Second Constitutional Period (1908–13). At his death aged 76, five months before the outbreak of the First World War, he still held office as president of the senate.

PHOTOGRAPHS: BURAK ÇETINTAŞ ARCHIVE

Said had been born in Erzurum in 1838, the son of a diplomat posted to Iran. He received a mosque education – four years in Erzurum, seven at Ayasofya in Istanbul. By his mid-twenties, in addition to the traditional Islamic subjects, he was studying some economics, politics and French – signs that he was planning a career in public life. The two areas of study did not sit well together. Said later recalled the occasion when during a class in Ayasofya he dropped his French textbook, with its infidel Latin letters, on the floor. It was hastily grabbed by a friend who warned him that if his classmates saw it they would beat him up there and then in the middle of the mosque.

Said was to be a man with a foot in two worlds – a cultural and social conservative. Though aware of the need to deal with the West, he belonged primarily to the East. Despite his early efforts to acquire some French, at that time the key international language, Layard in 1877 found him "entirely ignorant" of it.

We can only guess why a mosque education left Said a conservative, while Midhat Pasha, for example, became an ardent liberal and Westerniser after an ultra-religious education. By the late 1850s and early 1860s, when Said was starting to climb the first rungs of the Ottoman civil service, the Tanzimat, or Ottoman Reform Movement, was in full swing.

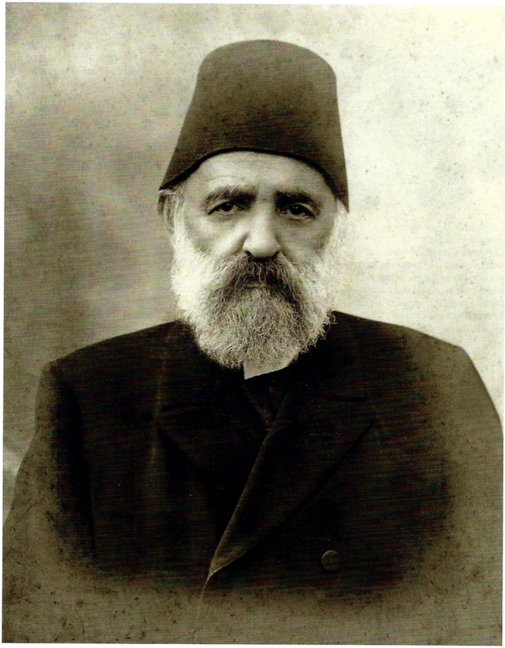
In the civil service, reformers were at the peak of their influence. The sultan of the day played a background role, while late Ottoman Turkey's two greatest statesmen, Âli Pasha and Fuad Pasha, alternated with each other as grand vizier and foreign minister. They handled the empire's foreign relations and pushed through Westernising reforms at home, which after their deaths would culminate in an attempt by Midhat Pasha in 1876-7 to turn the Ottoman Empire into a constitutional monarchy with a parliament.

Said's sympathies lay with the "Palace Party", conservatives who regained the upper hand after the death of Âli Pasha in 1871. One of its leaders, Damat Celalettin Pasha, spotted Said's exceptional abilities – even his critics conceded his intelligence – and made him secretary and letter writer in the office of the grand vizier. Damat Celalettin Pasha would die a gruesome death in Taif in Abdülhamid's reign in May 1884, at the hands of his guards. By then Said was in his fifth year as grand vizier.

The turning point was 1876. In the early summer of that year, one Ottoman sultan, Abdülaziz, was deposed by his senior officials, who regarded him as incompetent, and died mysteriously soon afterwards. The next sultan, Murad V, liberal but an alcoholic, lasted just three months before he too had to be deposed as insane. His younger brother Abdülhamid II then came to the throne, which he would occupy for nearly 33 years. He quickly set about reversing constitutionalism in Turkey and the reintroduction of palace rule. His first move against the constitutionalists was to break the promise he had given before becoming sultan by appointing Said Efendi as his private secretary. Shrewd, observant, a consummate intriguer, Said quickly became the Sultan's closest confidant. In swift succession, despite his inexperience, he served as minister of the civil list, then of the interior, then as president of the short-lived Ottoman senate, then as ministers of justice and of education, usually holding several posts at once.

He quickly became very unpopular: Ottoman liberals intensely disliked Abdülhamid's drive towards authoritarian rule and Said was seen as his chief accomplice. Eventually, on October 19, 1879, Said became grand vizier – or rather prime minister, as the office was then temporarily known in a nod to the Constitutionalists.

The appointment looked risky. Said was still a tyro where affairs of state were concerned and the agenda he faced could not have been more daunting. The Ottoman Empire had barely survived the disasters of the past half-decade – bankruptcy in 1875, followed by revolts in the Balkans and, after 1877, war, invasion and defeat by Russia,



ABOVE KÜÇÜK SAİD PASHA (LITTLE SAİD), MORE PROPERLY MEHMED SAİD PASHA, IN 1898, WHEN HE HAD ALREADY BEEN GRAND VIZIER FIVE TIMES AND STILL HAD FOUR TERMS TO GO OPPOSITE HIS KONAK ON TEŞVİKİYE CADDESİ. THE KONAK IS NOW A FASHION SCHOOL, THE ONLY SURVIVOR FROM THE GREAT PASHA PALACES OF OTTOMAN NIŞANTAŞI. HIS CHILDREN ARE IN THE CAR

and very nearly the loss of Istanbul to them.

Internationally, Said's appointment was not regarded as auspicious. A couple of weeks later, a British newspaper described him unkindly as: "…a tiny man with black whiskers all around his face, a deep black moustache, and little black twinkling eyes which furtively peer into every cranny of the room and into every line of the face of everybody in it. He does not stand more than about five feet high, and is thin and slightly built – a mere waif. Yet this man for many years has continued to hold his own against everybody in Constantinople, the only one who has never experienced any reverse of fortune… [Sultan] Murad found him as Abdülaziz had found him a clever and entertaining man… Little Said made hay whether the sun shone or not… His sympathies are known to be explained in the following words: 'Turkey for the Turks, and friendship for their nearest neighbour Russia.'"

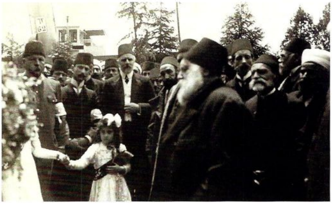
Over the next six years, until the autumn of 1885, Said was the dominant figure in the Ottoman administration, holding the grand vizier's office four times. A hated intriguer he might have been, but as *The Times* wrote after his death, "there was nothing dilatory or pusillanimous in his policy". Despite the dire situation, much of the empire's strength had gradually returned during the years of Said's ascendancy and the Hamidian system of autocratic rule, despotic though it was, crystallised.

There were plenty of setbacks. The Empire was forced to recognise Britain's takeover in Egypt. It lost Thessaly to Greece, basically because of Great Power pressure. Eastern Rumelia, immediately to the north of Istanbul, was swallowed up by Bulgaria in 1895.

Said's major achievement was to restore normality to Ottoman finances after four years of bankruptcy and repudiation of its debts, albeit at the cost of losing control of most public utilities to a board of foreign creditors, the Ottoman Public Debt Administration. It was largely due to his efforts that the railway connection between Istanbul and Vienna was completed in the second half of the 1880s. He planned other administrative reforms but most of these were blocked by the Sultan or the clergy.

Contemporaries recognised his success. In the summer of August 1885, Said won a favourable profile in *The Manchester Guardian*, which, contrary to the prevailing view, assured its readers twice that he was "not an intriguer". *The Times*, too, listed his achievements. "If ever a man had to make bricks without straw it was he, and yet of the bricks he has made, he has no cause to be ashamed," its correspondent wrote, referring to Said's "patient perseverance, remarkable ability, sound judgement, and persistent tenacity".

Working in the palace with the Sultan was a challenge in itself, nothing like life in a modern civil-service department.



BURAK ÇETINTAŞ ARCHIVE

THE GREAT SURVIVOR KÜCÜK SAİD PASHA RETURNED TO POLITICS AFTER THE YOUNG TURKS DEPOSED ABDÜLHAMİD II IN 1908. HERE HE IS SEEN (IN PROFILE) IN 1909 AT A BANQUET GIVEN AT THE HİDİV KASRI IN BEYKOZ TO CELEBRATE THE 2ND CONSTITUTION. THE YOUNG TURK LEADER AHMED RIZA BEY (CENTRE, IN A WHITE WAISTCOAT) IS THERE TO GREET HIM

Abdülhamid, an indefatigable worker, was omnipresent and sometimes slept at night on an office divan. Intrigues, threats, cajoling, rivalries, and above all constant distrust, throve around him. For many years Said seems to have been more trusted than any of the sultan's other servants.

In October 1885 Said was dismissed for trying to send 6,000 troops from the garrison of Istanbul to restore Ottoman rule in Eastern Rumelia (now southern Bulgaria, around Plovdiv). The Ottomans had the legal right to send the troops and would have been supported by all the Great Powers if they had done so. But it was too bold a step for Abdülhamid. A second cause of Said's downfall was a highly unpopular proposal to make tax-collection offices directly responsible to the central government in Istanbul, rather than to the local governor. Said went into the wilderness for a decade. It was described then as "forced seclusion" but may have been more like house arrest.

Perhaps Said knew too many secrets. In the Ottoman government he was replaced by Kâmil Pasha, a pro-British liberal with whom Said had been on bad personal terms for many years. (Confusingly, another Said Pasha, a Kurd and a former ambassador to Berlin, served as foreign minister for the next decade). But Küçük Said Pasha was not entirely banished from national affairs. Occasionally, as in the summer of 1890, he was invited to sit in on cabinet meetings in Yıldız Palace, Abdülhamid's seat of government.

A new issue was now overshadowing Ottoman politics: Armenian nationalism in the eastern provinces. Secret nationalist political movements had taken the leadership position traditionally held by the Armenian church and appealed regularly to Western European public opinion for support in their disputes with the Ottoman government on what they hoped would be the road to independence. These moves triggered a worsening cycle of reprisals, international complaints, and more reprisals, which were then used to support more calls for international intervention.

Said's policies towards Ottoman Christians when he was in office had generally been praised for being even-handed, but Armenians and their allies viewed him with suspicion, one British MP even claiming at Westminster that Said had once said: "To suppress the Armenian problem, one has to suppress the Armenians." There seems to be no independent verification of this remark.

Needing a strong minister, Abdülhamid turned once more to Said, and on June 8, 1895 he was again installed on the grand vizier's mother-of-pearl throne. If his reported words a few months later to the British ambassador, Sir Philip Currie, are correct, he was a most unwilling appointee, saying: "The last time the Sultan ordered me to accept the post of Grand Vizier and I refused he locked me all night in a closet at Yıldız Kiosk."

The Great Powers were pressing Turkey to allow them to appoint a high commissioner to oversee Armenian issues. Said's view (contrary to what was sometimes written about him later) seems to have been that concessions had to be made in order to achieve a lasting settlement. The Sultan strongly opposed this line, and Said now also faced onslaughts from a new "Palace Party", which was closer to the Sultan than he was.

Early in October the Armenian problem jumped from central and eastern Anatolia to the heart of Istanbul as mobs of Islamic conservatives began rioting against Armenians in Istanbul. That same day, Said was again sacked by Abdülhamid. Late at night, after a diplomatic dinner, his seals of office were removed without warning and he was replaced by Kâmil Pasha. "Whether the titular Grand Vizier be Said or Kamil," commented *The Times*, "the Sultan will undoubtedly remain the real Grand Vizier."

But actually Abdülhamid seems to have realised quickly that his new ministers were not what was required. As international tension over the Armenian question mounted, there were reports that the Sultan wanted Said back in office.

Then on December 5 the world was astonished to learn that Said and his 12-year-old son had taken refuge in the British Embassy. "He had been ordered by the sultan to reside at the Yıldız Kiosk but declined to do so, as he believed himself to be in personal danger," wrote *The Times*. "He has consequently taken advantage of the hospitality of the British Ambassador." Sir Philip Currie let it be known that his new guest was welcome to stay for months if he chose.

What had happened? Said knew Abdülhamid better than anyone and evidently judged the danger to be very real. One report at the time suggested Said had tried to pass on incriminating documents about the Sultan's role in the Armenian disturbances. Despite his staunchly Muslim and anti-British reputation, the moment the invitation to Yıldız arrived, he had jumped into a hackney cab with his son and rode incognito to the British Embassy. His choice made the German and Russian Embassies a little regretful.

Worldwide publicity gave the Sultan little choice but to bow to the inevitable: the alternative would have been that either Russia or Britain would have helped Said to go into exile. It took six days and 13 formal message exchanges between the palace and the embassy, but in the end a deal was struck. A Kurdish sheikh in a green turban was dispatched to the embassy, bearing an imperial promise to protect Said, sworn upon the Koran. The unfortunate sheikh, bare-legged despite the December weather, was attacked and felled on the embassy staircase by the ambassadress's Pekinese dog, but Said was able to leave in safety for his home, leaving Sir Philip a long letter of thanks with not a word of reproach against the Sultan but railing at intrigues in the palace. A day later the ambassador visited Said at his home, finding him "calm and cheerful" and somewhat consoled by the gift of a valuable pearl *tesbih* (rosary) from the Sultan. House arrest resumed.

Said's career continued intermittently for another 18 years. By March 1897 he was said to be "in great favour with the Sultan". Six years later Abdülhamid made him grand vizier again for 14 months. At the outbreak of the Young Turk Revolution in July 1908, he returned briefly in an effort to appease the rebels.

In his last half-decade Said became a conservative elder statesman in a constitutional but turbulent new world, serving as grand vizier, president of the senate and president of the Council of State, a constant enemy of the Young Turks. But on his death in March 1914 observers commented that he belonged to a vanishing world. ◆

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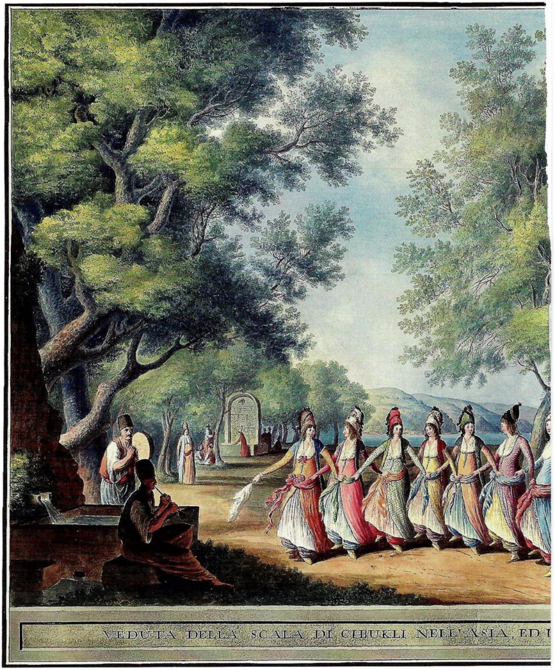
THE EMPIRE

Luigi Mayer made his mark with lively, quirky scenes for the British
and servants across the Ottoman Empire. He deserves

When Thomas Bruce, 7th Earl of Elgin, was appointed ambassador to the Ottoman Porte in 1799, he saw it as an opportunity to record and acquire fine examples of classical antiquities from Greece (hence the Elgin Marbles). To this end he sought advice from one of his predecessors, Sir Robert Ainslie, on the terms of employment for an artist he wished to hire as his draughtsman. Ainslie's response was that he had paid his artist 50 guineas a year, with board and travelling expenses, and "It was clearly understood that the whole of his works, drawings, pictures and sketches were to remain with me, as being my sole property."

Ainslie's artist is not named in the correspondence, but, from the remarkable watercolours that he produced, we know that he was Luigi Mayer (c1750/55–1803), who worked for the ambassador in Istanbul from probably 1786 until 1794, accompanying his patron on his return to England. Despite his large output of images depicting Istanbul and its environs, as well as the wider Ottoman Empire, Mayer's name is known only to a handful of collectors, and then in large part thanks to the volumes of aquatints published after his original work.

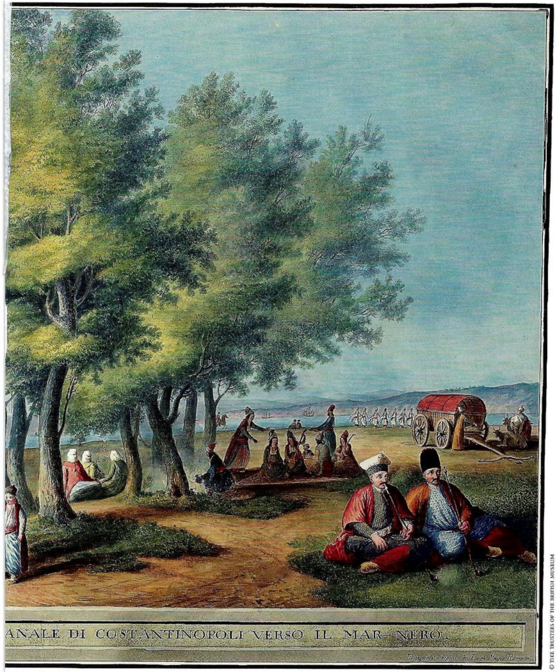
The artist Elgin eventually hired, Giovanni Battista Lusieri (1754–1821), was renowned during his lifetime, but until recently he too was unfamiliar to all but a few specialists. His name is now re-emerging from the obscurity into which it had fallen since his death, thanks to recent scholarly attention and to an exhibition at the National Gallery of Scotland in Edinburgh in 2012. Mayer, whose work is very different in approach and execution, is also worthy of serious investigation, but he has as yet received no such boost to his reputation.


VEDUTA DELLA SCALA DI CIBUKLI NELL'ASIA, ED I

Unlike Lusieri's career, which is fairly well documented through contemporary correspondence and the records of his numerous patrons, large parts of Mayer's life are shrouded in mystery. His name suggests he was of Germanic extraction, but nothing is known of his antecedents, nor are his place and date of birth reliably recorded. He appears to have received his artistic training in Rome, often signing his work Luigi Mayer Romano, and was reputed to have been a pupil of Giovanni Battista Piranesi. Evidence of a formal association with the celebrated Italian artist has not come to

UNVARNISHED

AMBASSADOR TO CONSTANTINOPLE, PAINTING VIZIERS AND VILLAGERS, SOLDIERS TO BE PLUCKED FROM OBSCURITY, ARGUES BRIONY LLEWELLYN


ANALE DI COSTANTINOPOLI VERSO IL MAR-NERO.
Disegnato e Dipinto da Luigi Mayer Romano

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DANCING DOWN THE BOSPHORUS

'View of the Landing Stage at Cibukli [Çubuklu] in Asia, and the Straits of Constantinople [Bosphorus], Looking Towards the Black Sea', 1786–89

Luigi Mayer, who is believed to have trained in Rome, in the *vedutista* tradition, showed a keen interest in everyday life during his years in the Ottoman Empire. This charming image of Greek and Turkish women and men on the Bosphorus, repeated by Mayer in several versions, captures the mingling of races, creeds and genders in late-18th-century Istanbul. Çubuklu, on the Asian shore, was known for its market gardens. It provided a convenient spot for women from the many Greek settlements on the Asian side to dance and make music.

Seven colourfully dressed women and a child dance in line, holding onto each other's sashes. They are accompanied by two men playing a *tef* (tambourine) and a *zurna* (double-reeded pipe). To the right, two men sit smoking long jasmine-wood pipes. Behind, another group of women sing and play a type of mandolin (*saz* or *tambur*), while one brews coffee. Beside them are three veiled Muslim women, probably brought by the ox-drawn cart, or *araba*, nearer the shore, where a European man is riding past. On the left, in the background, women draw water from a stone fountain.

LUIGI MAYER'S PAINTINGS All the images on these pages are painted in watercolour and gouache on sheets of paper, some almost a metre in width. The examples taken from the British Museum are from a series of 58 shipped back to England in 1789 on board the *Pearl*, and presented by Sir Robert Ainslie to George III.

light, but there is no doubt that Mayer's work draws heavily on the example of his more famous predecessor, and in particular the series of 135 etchings, *Vedute di Roma*, that Piranesi produced from around 1748 until his death 30 years later. The combination of crumbling ancient monuments, encroaching nature and lively local figures, within compositions of sometimes startling perspectives, that characterises Piranesi's work exerted a powerful influence on Mayer. So too did Piranesi's practice, followed by numerous *vedutisti*, or painters of views, of integrating text and image by including not merely the title ▷

itself but an elegant, almost poetic explanation of salient elements in the view.

By the early 1770s Mayer was in the employ of a Sicilian scholar and collector of antiquities the Principe di Biscari, in Catania. He remained in Sicily until the prince's death in 1786, meeting some of the northern European travellers who came to explore the island, attracted by its wild landscape, erupting volcanoes and well-preserved Greek temples.

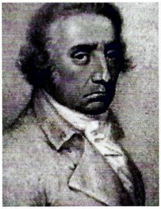
How and when he came to the notice of Sir Robert Ainslie is another of the missing pieces in the jigsaw of Mayer's life, but it may have been through the mediation of another Italian, the numismatist and antiquarian Domenico Sestini, author of numerous travel accounts, who was also employed by both Biscari and Ainslie.

It was common practice in the 18th and early 19th centuries for ambassadors and wealthy travellers to employ artists to accompany them abroad. In an age before photography, visual records of significant events and places were as important as textual documentation as markers of authority or achievement. Ainslie was not alone among diplomats in Istanbul in employing an artist to record the events of his office; as Philip Mansel, author of *Constantinople: City of the World's Desire,* has noted, the city inspired an unusual number of "embassy pictures".

Mayer's best-known predecessor as an "embassy artist" was Jean-Baptiste Vanmour, who arrived in Istanbul in 1699 in the suite of the Marquis de Ferriol and spent the next four decades recording both the life and costumes of the city as well as successive sultans' official reception of several European ambassadors. The brothers Gustaf and Ulrik Celsing, Swedish diplomats in the mid-18th century, commissioned a large collection of images, including some extensive views of the city and its shoreline. Ainslie's French opposite number and rival for influence at the court, the Comte de Choiseul-Gouffier, also employed two artists, Jean-Baptiste Hilaire and Louis-François Cassas. While the two ambassadors jockeyed for position, promoting the interests of their respective countries, these artists, although employed in a private capacity, produced images that played their part in the tangled web of political intrigue.

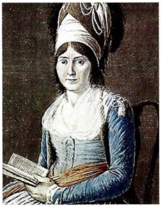
Mayer's work is unusual, not for his sweeping city panoramas and his recording of official occasions, magnificent as these are, but for his documentation of the more domestic aspects of Ainslie's residency and for his charmingly bucolic renditions of life outside the city. He thus visually underlines for Ainslie's contemporaries and successors the familiarity with Ottoman life for which the British ambassador was noted.

Ainslie was, as one commentator back at home expressed it, "strongly attached to the manner of the people... in his house, his garden, and his table he assumed the style and fashion of a Musselman of rank; *in fine*, he lived *en Turk*, and pleased the natives so much by this seeming policy... that he became more popular than any of the Christian ministers".



PRIVATE COLLECTION, COURTESY OF QUIST ANTIQUARIAN, DORDRECHT

Left Luigi Mayer, from a frontispiece to a now rare edition of 'Views in Egypt, Palestine, and Other Parts of the Ottoman Empire' (London, T Bensley) probably issued to mark his death in 1803. This is one of several sumptuous volumes of aquatints after Mayer's watercolours



© THE VICTORIA AND ALBERT MUSEUM, LONDON

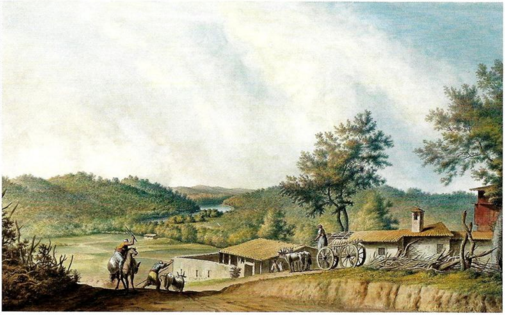
Right Mayer's wife, Clara (Chiara), née Barthold, 1799. Clara may have been the daughter or sister of a dragoman at the British Embassy. An artist herself, she remained in London after Luigi's death, publishing her own landscapes, drawn in the style of her husband's

Mayer's views of places in the Ottoman Empire beyond Istanbul and its surroundings served a further purpose for Ainslie. Like Choiseul-Gouffier and many other travellers of his wealth and station, Ainslie had strong antiquarian interests. Duty-bound by his office to remain in Istanbul, he was unable himself to explore the numerous archaeological remains in Turkey and beyond, and employed agents, notably Domenico Sestini, to collect coins and antiquities for him. When three young travellers arrived in Istanbul needing an artist to accompany them on their journey to Egypt and Syria, Ainslie gave Mayer a temporary release from his service.

Leaving the city on February 1, 1792, Mayer, with the three travellers, George Graves, Charles Berners and Henry Tilson, sailed down the west coast of Turkey. They called at Rhodes and Cyprus and went on to Egypt, voyaging up the Nile as far as Cairo. From Alexandria they sailed to Jaffa and made a trip inland to Jerusalem. They then continued by sea along the Syrian littoral to the south coast of Turkey, visiting the area they termed Caccamo, modern Kekova, nowadays much visited for its Lycian remains, but then little known to Westerners. Moving on, they explored Cnidus and Bodrum and berthed at Samos, from where Mayer returned to Istanbul in June. It was an extensive journey and the scenes of ancient monuments, of landscapes and of the local population that Mayer collected are a remarkable survey of Ottoman lands and their people, several years before images of these places became widely available to the West in the wake of the Napoleonic invasion.

Mayer's focus on the life of the towns and villages as much as on the imposing ruins suggests that he was not restricted by his patrons' antiquarian interests, but was free to follow his own inclinations in his choice of subjects. He treats people with candour and a strong sense of their humanity, at a time when foreigners were more often depicted as exotic stereotypes. This approach, coupled with his unusual compositions, sometimes seeming to draw on 18th-century theatrical traditions, sets Mayer's work apart from many of the more conventional Grand Tour watercolours, with their emphasis on scenery and antique ruins. His choice of colour and perspective is more often startling and idiosyncratic than confined within the bounds of picturesque tradition. In addition, the encounter between East and West that he and his party represented seems deliberately to be highlighted in the many opportunities he takes to show the English tourists meeting local inhabitants.

When Ainslie was recalled from Istanbul in 1793 he decided to travel home overland, and the following year Mayer and his wife, Clara (or Chiara), accompanied their patron on his journey through the Moldo-Wallachian Principalities. Unusually, Mayer's on-the-spot drawings from this trip survive, and these and his subsequent watercolours are an impressive record of a remote area of eastern Europe that was *terra incognita* to the West. Earlier in



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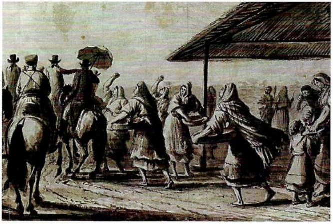
Above The Great Bent of Belgrade, 1786–89, seen from a village in the Belgrade Forest ('bent' is 'dam' in Turkish). The area between Istanbul and the Black Sea is famed for its reservoirs, which still supply the city with fresh water



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Below Villagers shower the British ambassador and his party with barley, like confetti, on their journey to England, 1794–95. This unusual sketch, made at the Ottoman village of Çali Kavak, near Shumen (Turkish Şumnu), now in Bulgaria, shows the liveliness of Mayer's draughtsmanship, which creates a vivid sense of the travellers' experience

the 18th century, Lady Mary Wortley Montagu's famous letters had brought some awareness of the region to Western audiences, but visual representations were scarce.

Arriving in England with Ainslie, the Mayers settled there, but it is not known how much continuing support they received from their former patron. Certainly Luigi worked for the Berners family, making views of their estates in Suffolk, and he may have been employed as a drawing master to other members of the landed gentry.

After his death in 1803, Clara, herself an artist, continued to draw and publish her own views of Istanbul in her husband's style. Many of Mayer's images reached a wider audience during the first decade of the 19th century when they were published as aquatints in a series of volumes under various titles, such as *Views in Egypt, Palestine, and Other Parts of the Ottoman Empire* (1801–04). For decades these remained the most extensive series of views of the Ottoman Empire available in the West, and were popular for their combination of the exotic East and awe-inspiring ruins. But when the Scottish painter David Roberts's hugely successful series of lithographs depicting Egypt, Syria and Palestine was published in the 1840s, Mayer's views went out of fashion.

As reproductions, the prints are pale reflections of Mayer's watercolours, which remained largely unknown until the 1980s. Many – notably the majority of the large group now in the British Museum as well as most of those from the Balkan journey – were not published. Those that did appear as aquatints were reduced in size and often conventionalised, with the more quirky and risqué aspects of Mayer's compositions toned down. The freshness of Mayer's approach to his unfamiliar subjects, and the considerable vigour with which he handles them, have yet to be fully appreciated.

Following pages

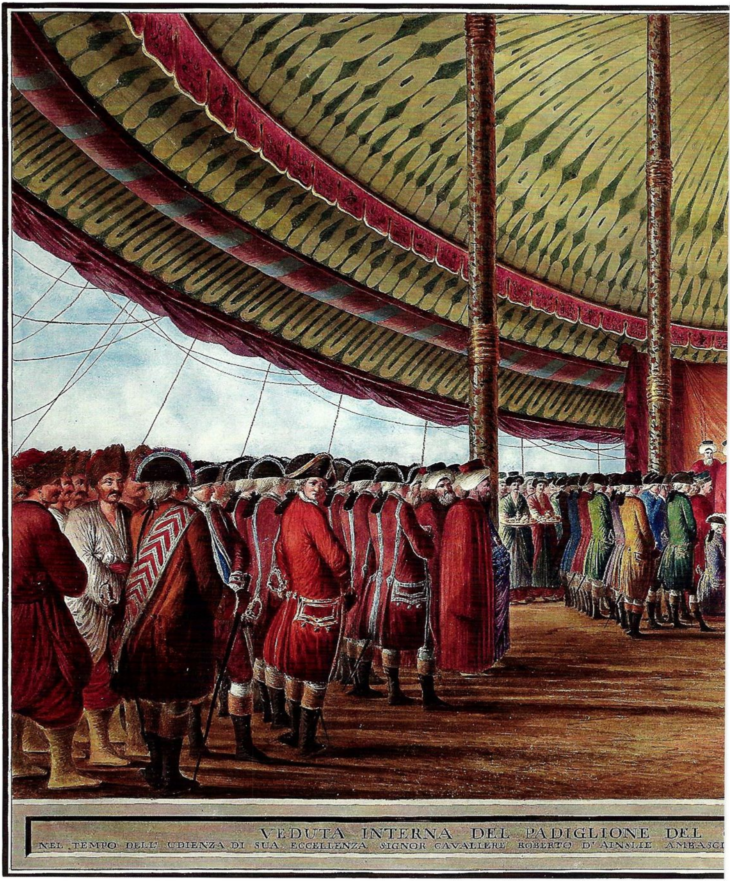
In the Pavilion of the Grand Vizier

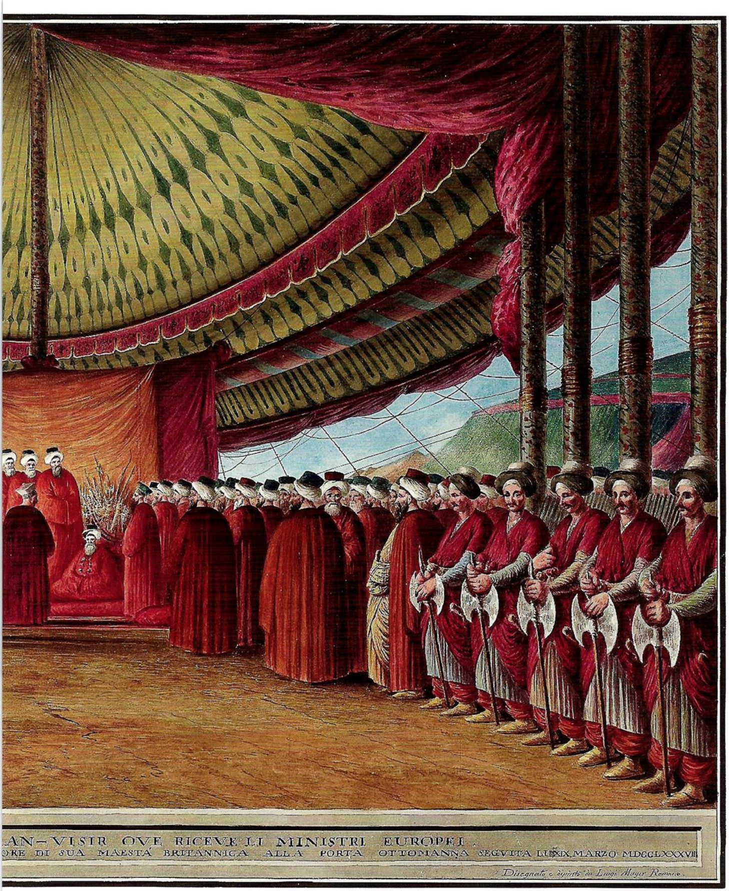
'The Pavilion of the Grand Vizier, Where He Received the European Ministers on the Occasion of the Audience of His Excellency Sir Robert Ainslie, His Britannic Majesty's Ambassador to the Ottoman Porte, 19th March 1788'

Encouraged by Britain, the Ottoman Empire declared war on the Habsburgs and Russia in August 1787. The next spring, the hawkish Koca Yusuf Pasha, Abdülhamid I's grand vizier, established a large encampment at Davutpaşa, ten miles west of Istanbul, before marching towards Austria, and gave audiences to several European ministers, including Ainslie.

Mayer here depicts the elaborate ceremonials for the occasion, beneath the grand vizier's distinctive green-roofed tent, with curtains of crimson silk that could be let down in case of bad weather. In the centre, the grand vizier sits on red cushions, surrounded by ministers of state, counsellors, an interpreter and army officers, all in red robes. On the right are the executioners with their two-headed battle axes. Behind the vizier is an array of elaborately decorated weaponry. On the vizier's right is Ainslie in Western ceremonial dress, seated on a low stool, with his own interpreter, his secretary and numerous court attendants.

In the left foreground a figure turns to the viewer: he wears a coat in a different tone of red with gold-trimmed pockets – this is probably the artist himself. The ensemble is held together by the dramatic perspective of the pavilion's canopy.


VEDUTA INTERNA DEL PADIGLIONE DEL
NEL TEMPO DELL' UDIENZA DI SUA ECCELLENZA SIGNOR CAVALLIERE ROBERTO D' AINSLIE AMBASC


AN-VISIR OVE RICEVE LI MINISTRI EUROPEI.
ORE DI SUA MAESTÀ BRITANNICA ALLA PORTA OTTOMANNA SEGVITA LI XIX MARZO MDCCLXXXVII
Disegnato e dipinto da Luigi Mayer Romano.

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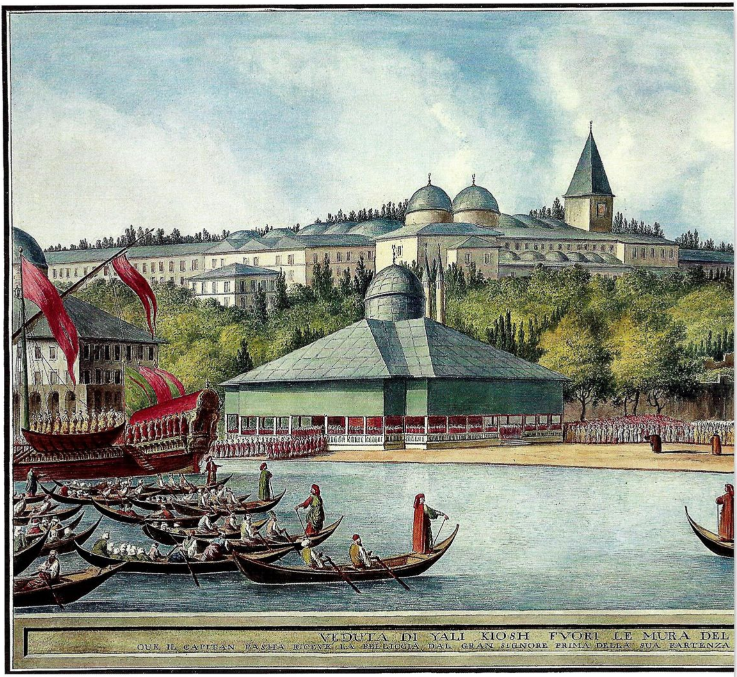
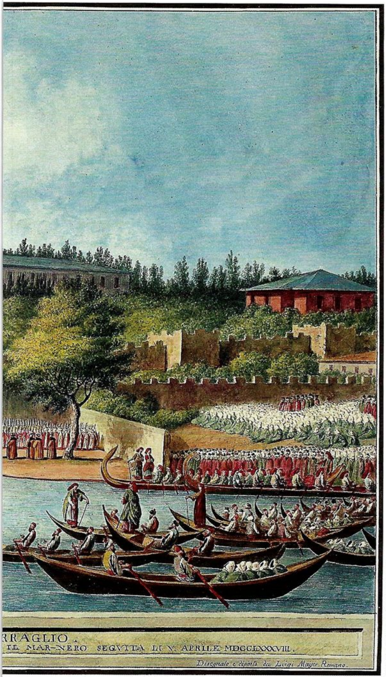

VEDUTA DI YALI KIOSH FVORI LE MURA DEL
OUE IL CAPITAN PASHA RICEVE LA PELLICCIA DAL GRAN SIGNORE PRIMA DELLA SUA PARTENZA

Standing on ceremony at the Seraglio

'View of the Yalı Kiosk outside the Walls of the Seraglio, where the Kaptan Pasha Receives the Fur Cloak from the Grand Signor before his Departure for the Black Sea, 5th April, 1788'

Before departing with his fleet for the campaign against the Russians in the Black Sea, the Turkish grand admiral, Cezayirli Hasan Pasha, receives the customary honour of the fur cloak, symbolising that as the Sultan's proxy he has assumed the imperial mantle for the ensuing conflict. The Kaptan Pasha, a lone figure across the water, centre stage, bows low before entering the kiosk to meet the sultan, who will afterwards pass through the guard of honour to his waiting barge, to the left of the composition. This display of the sultan's power and magnificence is witnessed by throngs of Ottoman subjects on both land and water. Numerous smaller vessels, from which men and women watch the proceedings, crowd the foreground, skilfully arranged by Mayer to draw the viewer's eye towards the action beyond. On the shore to the right is a large group of veiled Muslim women, interspersed by smaller groups of turbaned men.


RRAGLIO .
IL MAR-NERO SEGVITA LI V. APRILE MDCCLXXXVIII .
Disegnato e dipinto da Luigi Mayer Romano.

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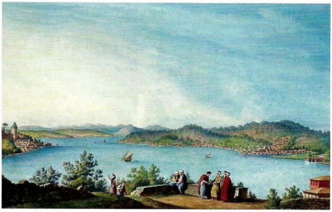
The 16th-century Yalı Köşkü, one of several waterfront pavilions at the entrance to the Golden Horn, was built by Selim I for such receptions. Above it on the hillside, the walls of the Topkapı make an imposing backdrop to the imperial ceremony. Once more Ainslie ensured that his artist recorded with considerable style an event of Ottoman history in which he had played a diplomatic role.



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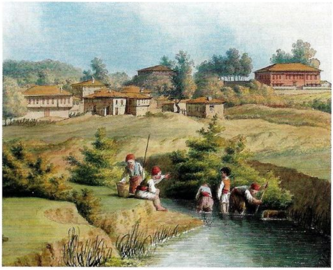
A GRAND VIEW OF THE BOSPHORUS

'View of the Northern Part of the Straits of Constantinople [Bosphorus] of the Two Castles and the Grand Signor's Kiosk of Ghiok-Suy [Göksu], Seen from Candilli [Kandilli] in Asia', 1786–89

Mayer's panoramic views follow an established formula of foreground figures in colourful costume on a high vantage point. He takes full advantage of the picturesque indented shoreline of the Bosphorus. Here the view is to the north, with the European shore on the left, the Asian on the right. The vantage point is a hill above Kandilli on the Asian shore, from which the two fortresses are seen to left and right of his large sheet of paper.



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RURAL IDYLL IN THE BELGRADE FOREST

A detail of Mayer's depiction of the village of Kömürcü Köyü in the Belgrade Forest, 1786–89

The Belgrade Forest was a favourite retreat for European residents of the city in the hot summer months, but, unlike the reservoirs, the substantial wooden mansions that once stood there were not often depicted by artists. Mayer's charming bucolic views of the villages capture Ottoman rural life with characteristic freshness and humour. The villages were moved in the 19th century after the Pasteur Institute established that hotels in Pera, washing their laundry near the reservoirs, were responsible for spreading the plague.

In the garden of Pera House

'Between the Palace and the Garden of the Gentleman Ambassador of England in Pera, Constantinople', c1794

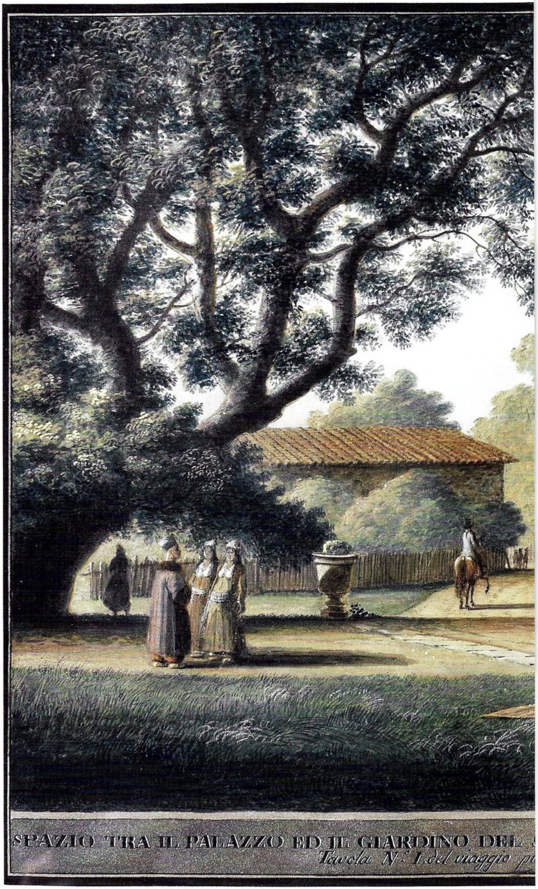
In this characteristically quirky composition, Mayer presents a behind-the-scenes view of the ambassador's domestic life. Prominent in the foreground are two servants beating clouds of dust out of a large carpet, while some yards from them, three more household members engage in a leisurely conversation. The inscription on this and other views of the private Balkan journey undertaken by Ainslie indicates that a publication was intended, but it does not seem to have materialised.

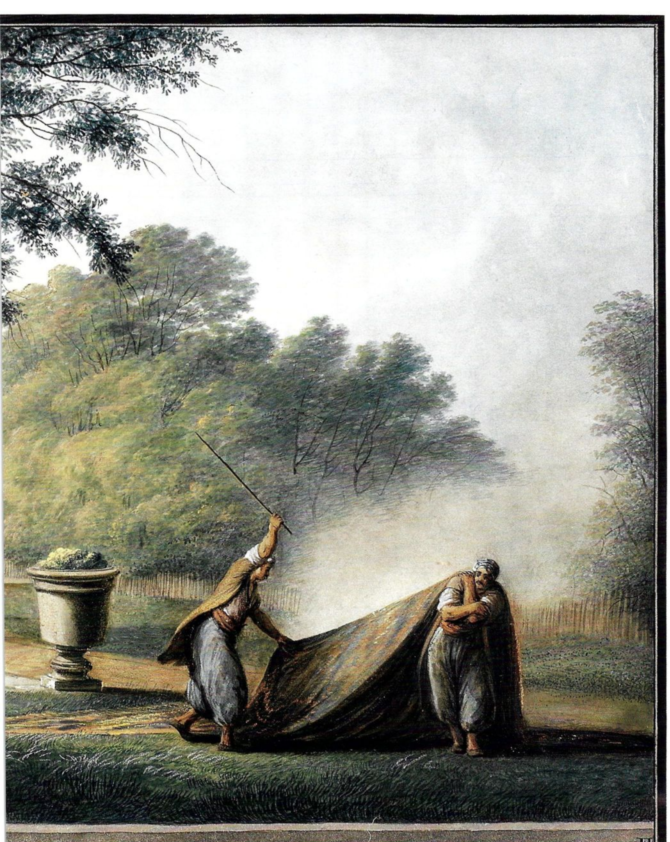
Following pages

Tarabya, where ambassadors took their ease

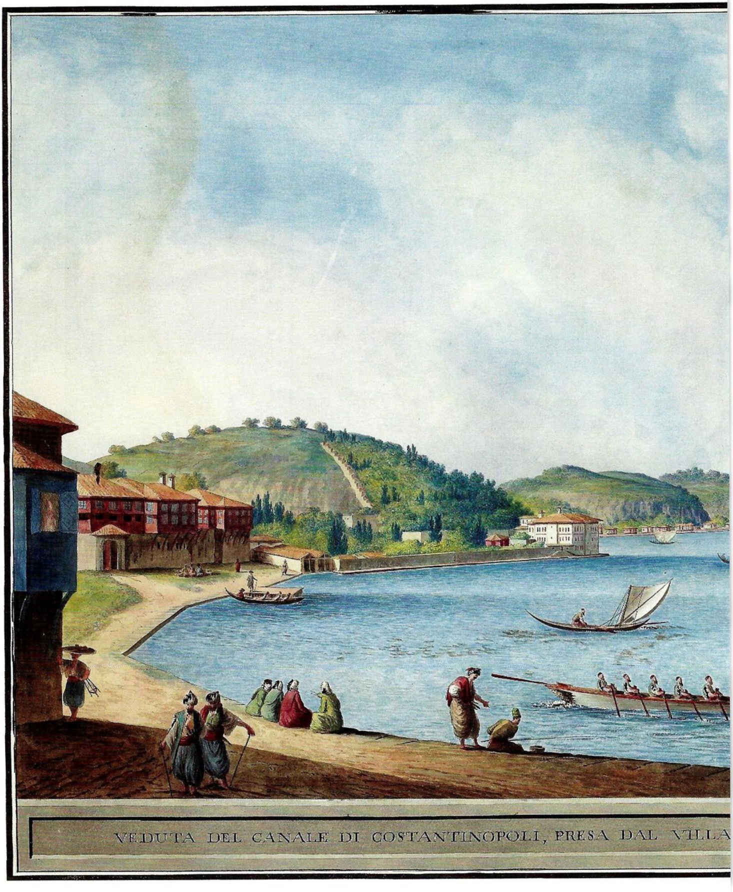
'The Straits of Constantinople [Bosphorus], Seen from the Village of Terapia [Tarabya], as Far as the Mouth of the Black Sea', 1786–89

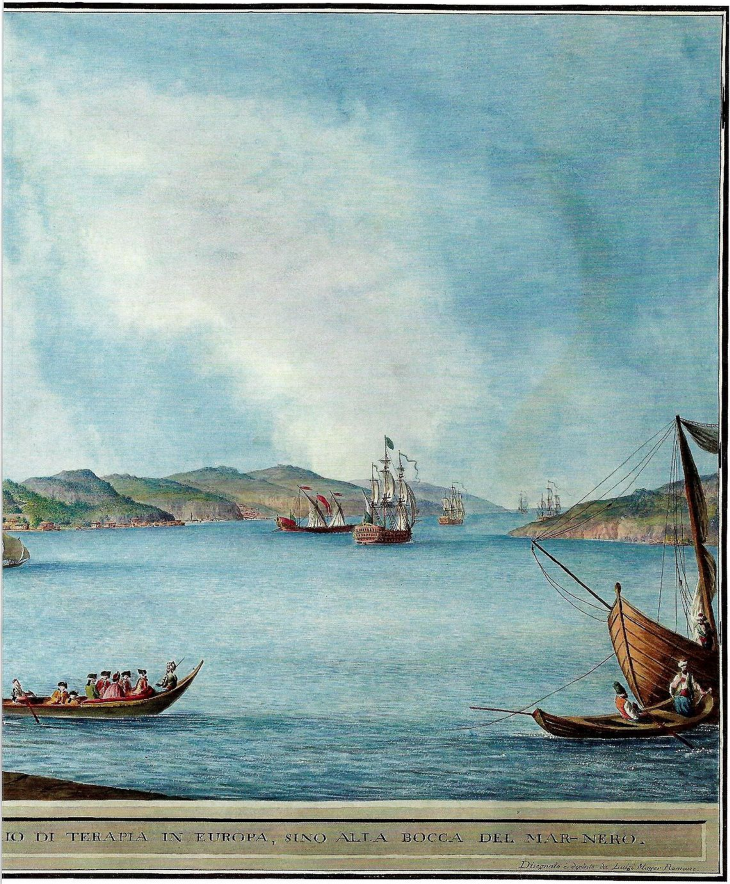
Many of the foreign embassies in Istanbul had their summer residences at Tarabya, or Terapia as it used to be known because of its therapeutic springs, a picturesque bay on the European side of the Bosphorus. From Tarabya visitors could make excursions to the famous reservoirs in the Belgrade Forest. Here a party of Westerners has arrived in a sailing vessel and is being rowed to the land in a caique. In the distance large sailing ships make their way out to the Black Sea. The prominent white building on the point was the British summer embassy. It was later rebuilt in the Swiss chalet manner before burning down in 1911. The French ambassador's summer residence, the building in oxblood red on the left, is still standing.


SPAZIO TRA IL PALAZZO ED IL GIARDINO DEL
Tavola N.° I. del viaggio


AMBASCIATORE D'INGHILTERRA IN PERA DI COSTANTINOPO-LI
esco del Sig.r Cav.r Roberto Ainslie,
Luigi Mayer dipinse

ÖMER M KOÇ COLLECTION


VEDUTA DEL CANALE DI COSTANTINOPOLI, PRESA DAL VILLA


IO DI TERAPIA IN EUROPA, SINO ALLA BOCCA DEL MAR-NERO.
Disegnato e dipinto da Luigi Mayer Romano.

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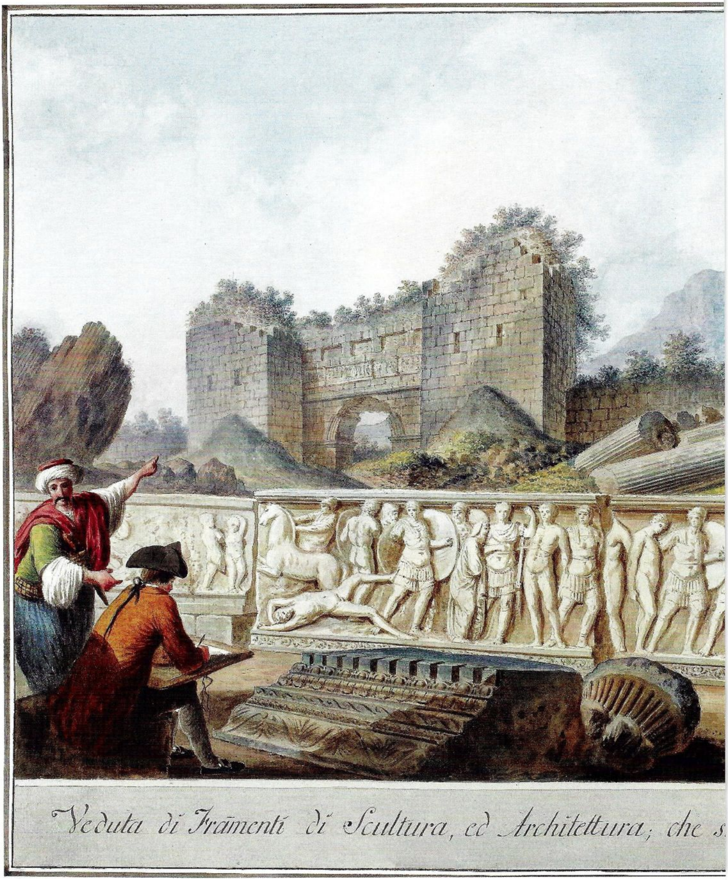
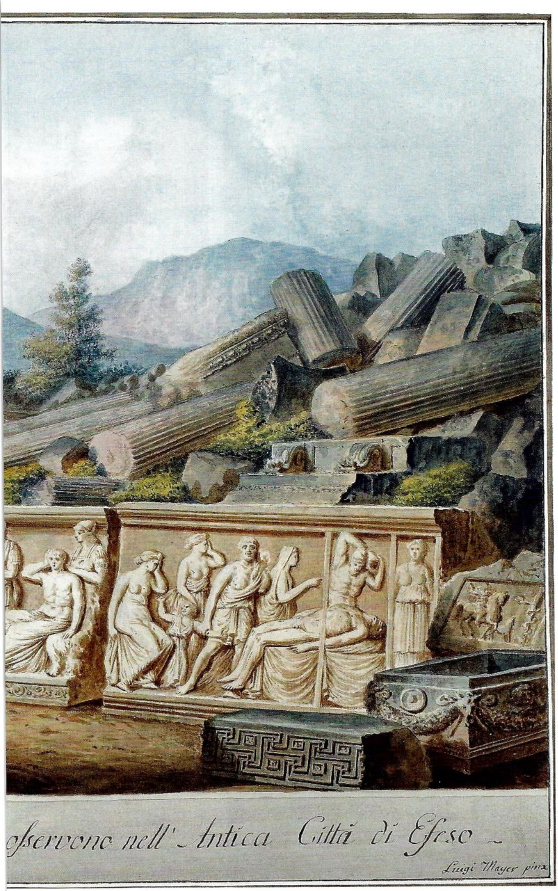

Veduta di Frāmenti di Scultura, ed Architettura; che s


oſservono nell' Antica Città di Efeso ~
Luigi Mayer pinx

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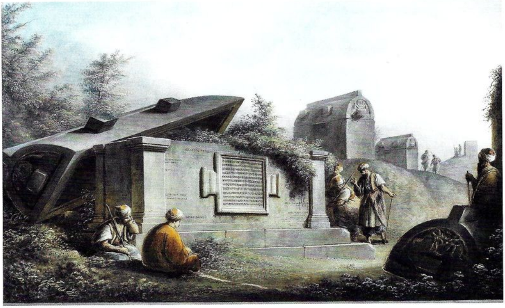
A GRAND TOURIST AT EPHESUS

'View of Fragments of Sculpture and Architecture Which Have Been Observed in the Ancient City of Ephesus', 1786–89

Two contrasting figures direct the viewer's eye in the left foreground of this striking composition. A Westerner in a tricorn hat sits sketching while beside him stands a Turk in local dress, gesturing to the imposing ruins before them. Our attention is thus directed both to the ruins themselves and to Western interest in them. The scene depicts the ruins on the south side of the hill of Ayasoluk (modern Selçuk). Dominating the composition is a fine Hellenistic relief, which depicts events from the Persian Wars. The frieze originally adorned the fortified gateway, constructed in the 7th or 8th century to protect Justinian's earlier Basilica of St John from Arab incursions. This came to be known as the Gate of Persecution, in the mistaken belief that it showed gladiators killing Christian martyrs. The reliefs were much discussed by early archaeologists. They were dismantled, and what survives of them is now at Woburn Abbey, Bedfordshire.

The mass of fallen columns and stone blocks to the right, as well as the sarcophagus and architraves in the foreground, seem to be part of the remains of the basilica, itself built using spolia from the ancient Artemision, a huge Hellenistic temple dedicated to the goddess Artemis (Diana). Before the excavations of the 19th century, little was known of the ancient sites at Ephesus and Ayasoluk. Mayer's view is therefore a valuable record of how the latter may have appeared at the time, though how much he has rearranged the architectural elements in the foreground and the heap of fluted columns beyond to suit his artistic purposes is hard to judge.

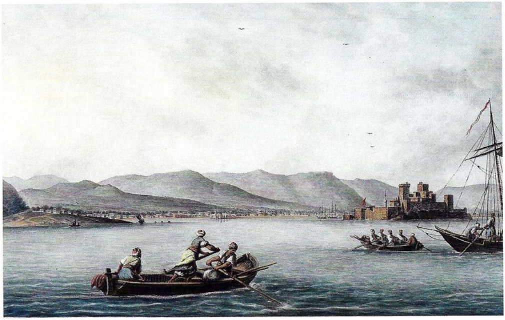


ÖMER M KOÇ COLLECTION

THE ELUSIVE LYCIANS

'Colossal Sarcophagus with a Well Preserved Inscription on a Square Panel, Found in the Lower Part of the Port of Caccamo in Caramania', *1792–1803*

When Mayer, in the company of three English travellers, visited these ancient Lycian tombs on the south coast of Turkey, he was encountering territory virtually unknown to the West. Many of the ruins were accessible only by sea and did not become the subject of archaeological investigations until the mid-19th century. Mayer's "Caccamo" probably corresponds to the Bay of Kekova, known for its enormous tombs. This one has so far eluded identification: it may have been destroyed in a subsequent earthquake or it may be evidence of Mayer's artistic licence. His "Caramanian" views became known to the British public through their publication in 1803 in *Views in the Ottoman Empire, Chiefly in Caramania.* Some years later, c1809, the aquatints took on a different form as decoration for Spode's series of "Caramanian" patterned blue-and-white ceramics, bringing Mayer's views into the domestic heart of the British middle classes. This image is in pen and ink, black chalk, watercolour and gouache, and at 480 by 635mm is somewhat smaller than the views of Istanbul.



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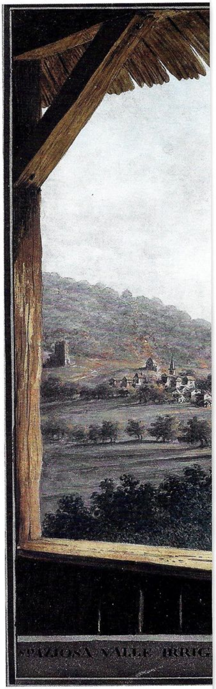
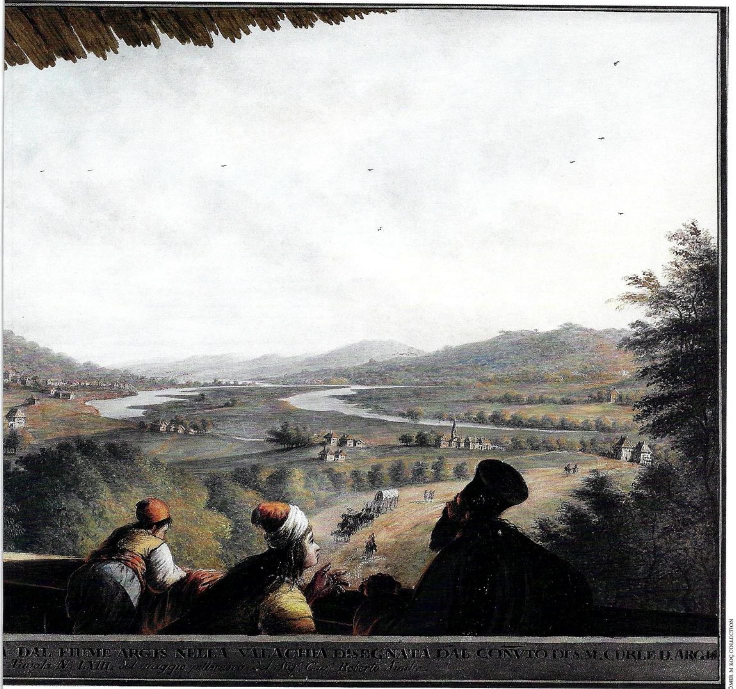


BODRUM AND THE CASTLE OF ST PETER

'View of the Town and Castle of Budron [Bodrum], Formerly Halicarnassus, Situated on the Coast of Anatolia', 1792–1803

The local population of the places he visited interested Mayer as much as their historic monuments. Here he captures the effort exerted by the crew of a small boat, as they row hard against the wind towards a


DAL FIUME ARGIS NELLA VALACHIA DISEGNATA DAL CONVTO DI S.M. CURLE D.ARGIS
Tavola N° LXIII. del viaggio pittoresco del Sig.r Cav.r Roberto Ainslie

ÖMER M KOÇ COLLECTION

sailing vessel being towed into harbour by another small rowing boat, presumably to join the tall ships already at anchor there. In the background is the Castle of St Peter, constructed in the 15th century by the Knights of St John from the remains of the Mausoleum at Halicarnassus. On the promontory protecting the harbour, it is still Bodrum's most conspicuous landmark.

A journey through the Carpathians

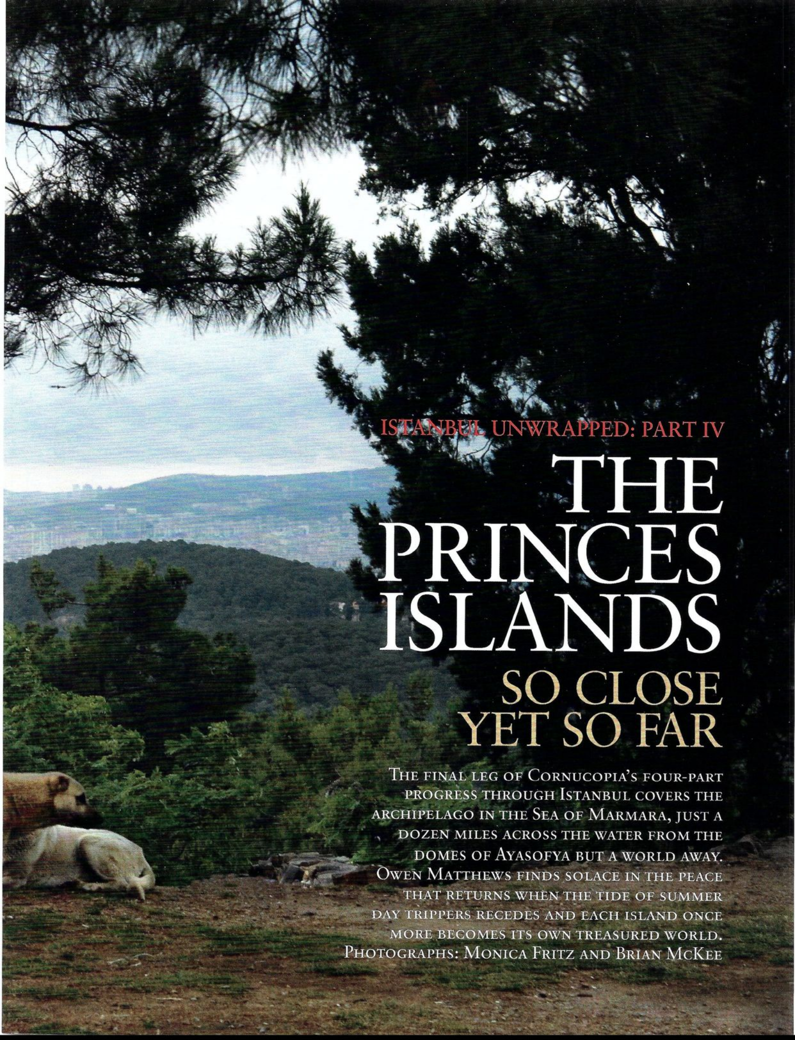
'Wide Valley Watered by the River Argis [Argeş] in Wallachia Drawn from the Convent of S.M. Curle in Argis', 1792–1803

A typically dramatic work, in which Mayer uses the theatrical device of a frame through which the silhouetted figure of an Orthodox priest, a young woman and a child look out onto the wide river valley below. The viewpoint seems to be looking south from the monastery at Curtea de Argeş, incorrectly transcribed in the title as "S.M. Curle". Founded by Prince Neagoe Basarab in the 16th century, the monastery is in the foothills of the Carpathian Mountains, north of Bucharest. Travellers such as those in the wagon below, with its many horses, had to ford the swollen river before undertaking the arduous journey ahead.

Briony Llewellyn, an independent scholar, has published extensively on British artists' depictions of the Near and Middle East. See Cornucopia *45 for her article on the 19th-century Orientalist JF Lewis in Istanbul. bjl@btinternet.com*

Paradise untouched: how Istanbul might have remained if the developers hadn't run amok. Istanbul's Asian suburbs, now a wall of concrete, seen from the restful, pine-scented hills of Büyükada

MONICA FRITZ



ISTANBUL UNWRAPPED: PART IV

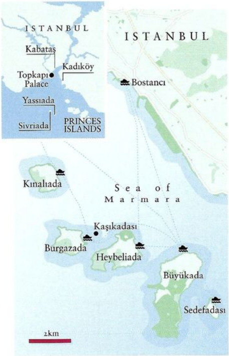
THE PRINCES ISLANDS

SO CLOSE YET SO FAR

The final leg of Cornucopia's four-part progress through Istanbul covers the archipelago in the Sea of Marmara, just a dozen miles across the water from the domes of Ayasofya but a world away. Owen Matthews finds solace in the peace that returns when the tide of summer day trippers recedes and each island once more becomes its own treasured world.

Photographs: Monica Fritz and Brian McKee

PHOTOGRAPHS: MONICA FRITZ



SUSANNA HICKLING

EACH TO THEIR OWN

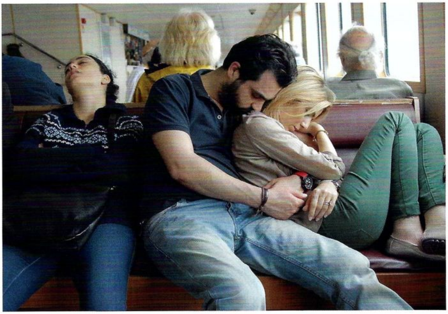
Owen Matthews introduces our portrait of the Princes Islands, from busy Büyükada, via pretty Heybeliada, one-hill Burgaz and arid Kinaliada, to the haunting, deserted Yassiada. Each of the nine islands has its own distinct character and history – sometimes very dark indeed. None has more than a single town, which shares its island's name

Ever since the Byzantines first named the Princes Islands as a place of exile for fallen members of royal families, the archipelago has been known as a place of seclusion, and of escape. Fishing villagers apart, it was monks who first settled the islands, founding monasteries and *sketes* (hermits' settlements) on almost every one of them – even the tiny 200-metre-long Neandros, which boasts the ruins of an eighth-century abbey.

In Ottoman times they became places where the rich could hide from the ravages of periodic plagues in the city – though Sir Edward Barton, Elizabeth I's ambassador to the Sublime Porte, left it too late and brought the plague with him in 1597, and died and was buried on Heybeliada.

In the 19th century the islands became places where the Constantinopolitan bourgeoisie – the Christian and Jewish minorities in particular – built lavish wooden summer villas for their families, creating a kind of Levantine Long Island.

Today the islands are a strange hybrid – part day-trip destination for Stambullus too poor to go anywhere else, part old-money suburb, part trendy refuge for bourgeois bohemians with young families. At weekends in summer the quayside of Büyükada can be more crowded than Taksim Square, a thronging hubbub of ice-cream vendors, touts advertising beaches, wobbly first-time



Opposite The arrival of the day's first ferry from Kabataş in central Istanbul at the quayside of Büyükada, the last stop. In summer the quay can be as crowded as Taksim Square
Top Looking out on a changing world
Above A moment to catch up on sleep on one of the comfortable old ferries

cyclists and gangs of Arab tourists. But in midwinter the islands are almost eerily quiet, their big houses shuttered against the Lodos south wind and the woodlands abandoned to carriage horses turned out to forage for themselves.

There are four main inhabited islands: **Kınalıada** (known as Proti in Greek), the closest to the city, which gets its Turkish name from the henna (*kına*) colour of its rock. **Burgaz** is known as Antigoni in Greek. **Heybeliada** (Halki in Greek) is named after the Turkish for saddlebag, which its double hills resemble. And **Büyükada**, or Big Island, formerly Prinkipo, was the original Prince's Island, when it belonged to the future emperor Justinian in the 6th century AD. One further island, **Sedef**, is also inhabited but is the private property of its 120 residents. Two more, **Yassıada** and **Sivriada**, have stories steeped in tragedy. Most of the islands and their towns are known by their shortened names – Kınalıada becomes Kınalı; Heybeliada is Heybeli – though Büyükada always keeps it full name.

Each of the islands has a quite different character. Kınalı is the least charming and often the most crowded; being closest to the city, it is disfigured by mobile-phone and TV masts and is barely wooded. The Byzantines reserved exile on Kınalı as an especially cruel trick to play on deposed royalty: the Emperor Romanus IV Diogenes, overthrown after his defeat by the Turks at Manzikert in 1071, tended his monastic cabbages within tantalising sight of the lights of the dome of Ayasofya before being blinded on the orders of his successors. But the island has special importance for the 70,000-odd Armenians of Istanbul,

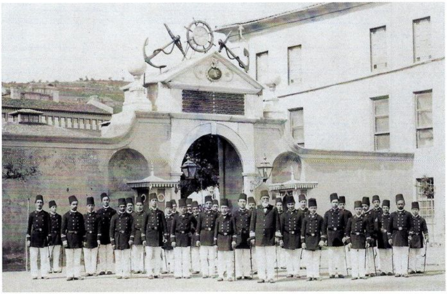
PHOTOGRAPHS: MONICA FRITZ

as it is one of the few places in the city where they are a majority. In summertime it becomes an informal dating club for Armenian youth.

Burgaz was one of the most charming islands until a devastating fire in 2003 wiped out almost all of its pine woodland. But the island still has many handsome 19th-century mansions and the prettiest mosque, as well as a very fine Greek Orthodox parish church.

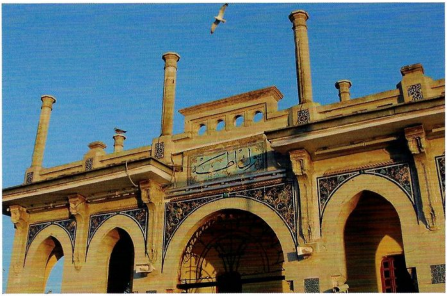
On the west side of Burgaz is one of the loveliest and most secluded spots anywhere in Istanbul, the restaurant of Kalpazankaya. It is a very basic kebab-beans-and-salad sort of place spread over several levels of rough concrete terracing. But its view of the sunset over the city is unrivalled, and the walk to it through the fragrant pine-lined road (spared by the fire) is magical.

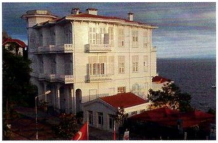
Heybeli has the largest year-round population of "real" people, thanks to its Naval Academy, which moved to the island from the mainland in 1834. Every day in term time the island resonates to the sound of hundreds of teenage cadets mastering the art of massed drumming and marching, rifle shooting, or mustering at assembly to the march from Verdi's *Aïda*. ◆



BURAK ÇETINTAŞ ARCHIVE

TOP A CAT TAKES A STROLL UP A LANE BLISSFULLY FREE OF TRAFFIC, OFF ÇANKAYA CADDESİ, BÜYÜKADA'S MAIN STREET ABOVE OTTOMAN CADETS IN THEIR SMART FEZZES AT THE NAVAL ACADEMY ON HEYBELİADA IN THE 19TH CENTURY. THE SCHOOL HAD BEEN FOUNDED ON THE GOLDEN HORN IN 1773, THE DATE DISPLAYED ON WHAT WAS ONCE MAHMUD II'S KALYONCU (GALLEON OARSMEN) BARRACKS, BUILT IN 1828. IT MOVED TO HEYBELİADA IN 1834. BY THEN TURBANS HAD BEEN REPLACED BY FEZZES





Top Perhaps the most picturesque viewpoint in Istanbul is the rocky 662ft escarpment on Büyükada's highest hill, Yücetepe, site of the Orthodox monastery of Aya Yorgi, and venerated by Muslims and Christians alike

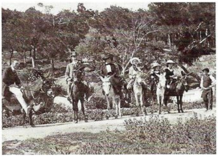
Above left The ferry station on Büyükada, designed by Mihran Azaryan, was built in 1914 and decorated with Kütahya tiles by Mehmet Emin Efendi. The upper floor housed the Casino de Prinkipo and briefly became the island's first cinema

Above centre The view from a guest room in the Splendid Palas Hotel of another handsome wooden palace across the street, the former Calypso Hotel, which is now missing the tall cone on its tower

Above right The ferry station at night

Right As private cars are banned on all the islands, phaetons with wickerwork seats and tasselled awnings serve as taxis. Only on Kinaliada are they, too, forbidden Below, from top Araba Meydani, the phaeton park close to Büyükada's ferry station; a donkey expedition in the early 1900s; waiting for business in front of one of the island hotels; a removal van

Brian McKee

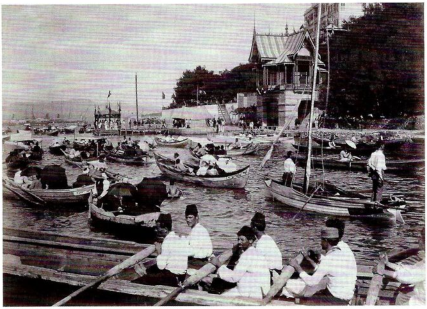


Burak Çetintaş Archive

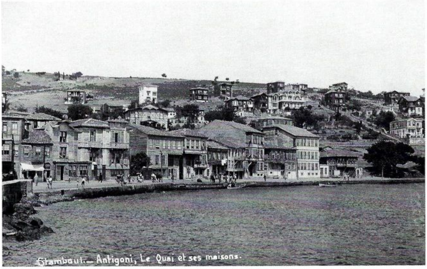
Photographs: Monica Fritz

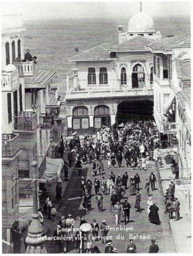
192
BÜYÜKADA

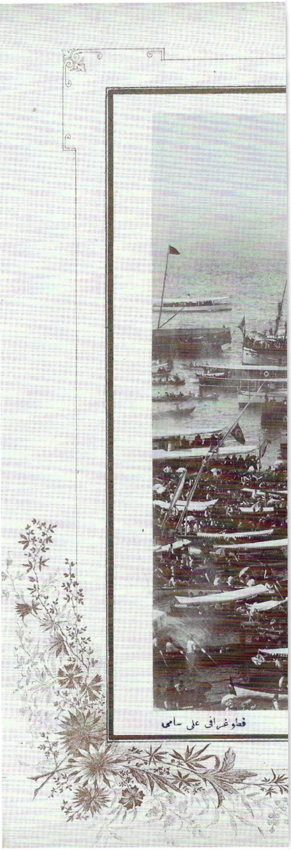
204
BÜYÜKADA



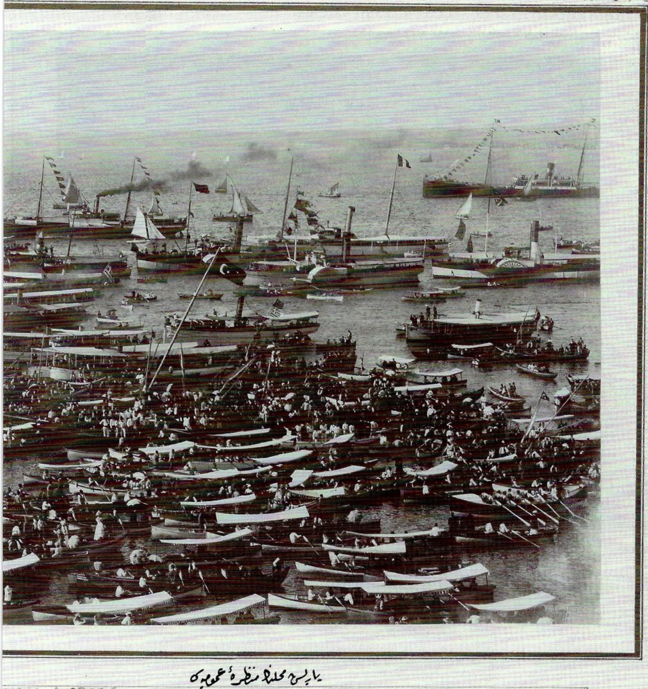
PHOTOGRAPHS: BURAK ÇETINTAŞ ARCHIVE


Stamboul.— Antigoni, Le Quai et ses maisons.


Constantinople.— Prinkipo
Débarcadère vers l'arrivée du Bateau.


فطوغرافی علی سامی

Main picture The Prinkipo Regatta in 1903. This became a popular fixture in 1866 and coincided with the feast day of the local Panagia Church, August 15, which swelled the number of spectators. In 1906 the organisers founded the Prinkipo Yacht Club. After it went bankrupt in 1937, the handsome clubhouse became the Istanbul branch of Ankara's Anatolian Club
Top Stands and pavilions line the quay for the event
Above The more tranquil quay at Burgaz (Antigoni)
Right A crowd of boaters and fedoras emerges from Büyükada's 1914 ferry station



یاریش محلنڭ منظرهٔ عمومیه‌سی

Büyükada

THE WRITER'S ISLAND

SINCE HE BECAME ENCHANTED BY THE 'BIG ISLAND' 15 YEARS AGO, OWEN MATTHEWS HAS ENJOYED ITS SEASONAL CHANGES AND WATCHED ITS POPULARITY GROW – NOT LEAST AMONG SOAP-OPERA FANS

SIMON UPTON

ABOVE CON (PRONOUNCED JOHN) PASHA'S 1880 MANSION AS IT WAS WHEN OWEN MATTHEWS ARRIVED ON BÜYÜKADA
OPPOSITE BÜYÜKADA STREET LIFE IN 2015

BÜYÜKADA, AUGUST 5, 2015

It has been 15 years since this island first captured us in its delicate web. It was early spring when we first came to Büyükada. White paint was peeling from the façades of the grand houses after a winter of sea winds and damp. The cafés were mostly closed, their windows covered with brown paper. The venerable Splendid Hotel was closed too, in the days before natural gas came to Büyükada, when central heating was regarded as a metropolitan luxury. My girlfriend and I had to make do with the İdeal Pansiyon, a tottering three-storey wooden mansion covered in precarious fretwork detailing that with every gust of wind trembled to be free. The name was unconsciously ironic, of course, because in truth the beds squeaked alarmingly, the shared bathroom was covered in boarding-house grime out of a Steinbeck novel and our room inexplicably housed an antique Westinghouse refrigerator that rumbled all night. Outside on the balcony, clearly structurally unsound, the seagulls were as loud as motorcycles. Bed and breakfast cost ten million lira, charged per person per night like in a flophouse. But the proprietress was friendly and served us tea in a parlour decorated with old family photographs and dominated by a cast-iron stove connected to the chimney stack with wonky steel flues.

There was an odd stillness about Büyükada that we found bewitching, that charm of abandoned places that clings to off-season resorts, the sense that life is elsewhere. Back then the memory of the terrible earthquake of 1999 was still fresh. Spooked Stambullus had decided that the islands were in an especially dangerous corner of their seismic zone. Surely if that's the case, I thought, better to live in a flexible wooden island house than a rigid concrete urban high-rise? I did not press the point. Rents were low. All our new Istanbul friends regarded the idea of living on the island as a sign of deep eccentricity bordering on insanity.

We found a house by pure serendipity. The mansion was built in 1888 by a Greek family called the Corpis, who somewhat improbably made a fortune smelting the red rock of Büyükada into iron. The Corpis liked the architecture so much that they ordered three identical houses, all in a row, for their extended family. Ours was the middle one, a white Victorian clapboard villa with a giant terrace and an overgrown garden snaking down to the sea. On each floor there is a broad *salon* that runs right through the house from front to back. There is a room in each of the four corners, and the ceilings are higher than the rooms are broad, giving an illusion of great space. The outside walls are more window than wood, expanses of bumpy handmade glass designed to be removed in the summertime to allow the sea breeze to flow through louvred green shutters: natural air conditioning.

The garden is shaded by century-old Mediterranean pines loaded with orange trumpet vine. From the terrace there is a view of Ayasofya across 14 miles of water. On certain days in spring and autumn a trick of the light makes the skyline of the Sarayburnu peninsula stand out with uncanny clarity. In the evenings the sun sets over the neighbouring island of Heybeliada in a daily apocalypse of pink and orange that still stops me in my tracks. It is terribly beautiful.

The only links to the mainland in those days were the venerable white municipal ferries that ran a dozen times a day in each direction, 90 minutes' stately progress from Sirkeci Station to Büyükada. The various boats were members of the island community in their own right, each with its own identity. The sleek *Fenerbahçe* was my favourite. Nearly a thousand tons' displacement, built in 1952 in Dumbarton on the Clyde, her massive paired diesels propelled her at a fantastic 18 knots even in her deep old age. The noise of the great engines roaring full astern as she came alongside the old stone piers was the sound of arrival on the island. On the long crossings I would think of the *Fenerbahçe* steaming proud and brand-new through the Straits of Gibraltar and past the heel of Italy on her one-way journey from Scotland to Istanbul. She's still in the city, varnished and prettified in the Rahmi M Koç Museum, as unlike her living, working self as Lenin's embalmed corpse is to the man he was. But doubtless a better fate than the scrapyard.

I soon acquired a boat of my own, a small wooden rowing caique called the *Clio* that I moored at the little quay at the bottom of the garden. We had a baby son and immediately afterwards got married, a slight organisational confusion. It was a grand affair – drinks at the old Casino de Prinkipo on the upper floor of the old ferry terminal. The marriage itself was at the magnificent Cathedral of Aya Dimitrios, seat of the Greek Bishop of Prinkipo. His flock numbered barely a thousand, but nonetheless a small geriatric choir was scraped together to perform the liturgy. The wedding party was at the 1908 Splendid Hotel, with dozens of gypsy musicians. At one point I recall the band was dancing and the guests standing, which seemed the wrong way round. Someone took black-and-white photographs, and since all the guests were in evening dress one had the eerie impression that the revels had taken place a century previously, and maybe that Kemal Atatürk was anxiously awaited as guest of honour.

A second son followed. Our boys grew up utterly used to horse-drawn carts delivering bottles of gas and water to the door, but rushed excitedly to wave at the municipal rubbish truck with its rumbling engine. They had one friend on one neighbouring island, another on the next. Our elder son came to the conclusion that every child, therefore, had its own island, rather like the various planets in *The Little Prince*, each with its sole inhabitant.

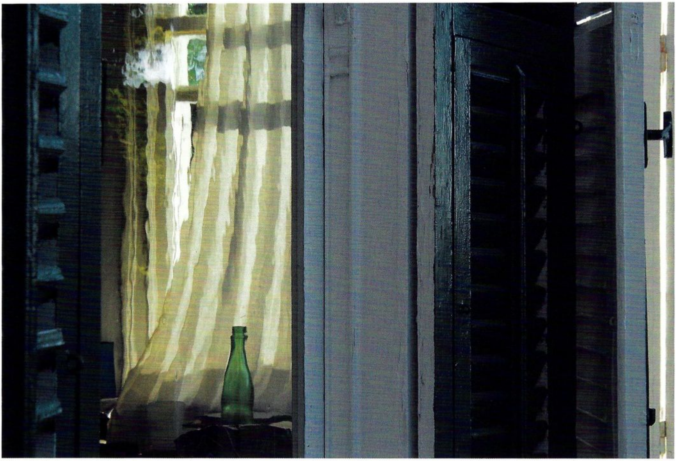
Our fellow year-round islanders were a strange mixture. When I moved there, I once asked a neighbour if there were any people on Büyükada in winter. "It depends how you define people," he said. It was true – almost all the big houses were shuttered at the end of the "*saison*" – *sezon* in Turkish – and our neighbourhood was dark and empty. But in the humbler parts of town the local tradesmen – including, amazingly, some working fishermen – still huddled round pot-bellied stoves in the fug of the pre-smoking-ban teahouses. On still winter days the village, like parts of Istanbul until very recently, smelled strongly of the smoke of brown coal. The square of Araba Meydanı, where Büyükada's 250 carriages (still charmingly known as phaetons) wait for customers, still stinks – as the whole world used to stink – of the ammoniacal reek of horse urine and dung.

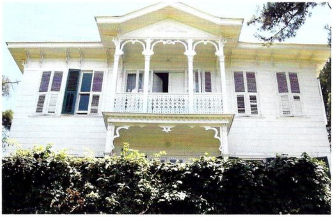
Autumn brought sudden, vicious storms, which wrecked my beloved *Clio* and have smashed four more boats since. The airy spaces of our house's *piano nobile*, purpose-built to catch all possible draughts, became uninhabitable and we began the habit of moving house inside our own home twice a year. Our summer bedroom is directly above our winter one, which is on the warmer, brick-built, centrally heated ground floor. Both rooms have similar furniture and the same arrangement of windows and floor space, with the crucial difference that the ceiling was much lower downstairs, leading to weird half-waking nightmares that one was in an Edgar Allan Poe story where everything is almost the same but disturbingly different.

The boys grew and needed education. We persuaded a fierce but wonderful governess named Eleanor Fitzgeorge-Parker to move from England to put the fear of God into the little chaps. We rented a house up the hill for her, and the boys trudged up daily to attend a class of two, supplemented by virtual schoolmates cut out of cardboard by Mrs Fitz. Later a fellow islander, a brilliant young German composer who taught at the Istanbul Conservatory, taught them piano. The piano arrived, like all other respectable islanders, on the ferry *Fenerbahçe* and was manhandled all the way to the house by two sweating strongmen. On the steep final hill going down to the house we recruited a scrum of house guests and passers-by – like extras in a Laurel and Hardy film – to help stop the monster running away downhill into the sea.

The island has come to define our lives. As a foreign correspondent I spent much time

MONICA FRITZ





PHOTOGRAPHS: MONICA FRITZ

in various godforsaken hellholes from Afghanistan to Iraq. But Büyükada was always there, more or less unchanging, to welcome me back in a soothing cocoon of ivy, bougainvillea and oleander. In recent years word of our island delights has got out into the world, and a startling variety of friends of friends find their way to our terrace. My wife complained recently that we entertained over 300 people at our home last year. I was rather pleased. Most of our new friends are interesting, or at the least mildly entertaining, and all one has to do is to sit on the divan dispensing free booze and listen to their tales. The mountain comes to Mohammed.

These islands are ancient places. Islands in this stream have held all kinds of perils for travellers since the dawn of history. I should count myself lucky that I happened on one inhabited by lotus eaters rather than anything more menacing, like sirens or Cyclopes or sorceresses. John Fowles wrote that "island communities are the original alternative societies… Some vision of Utopian belonging, of social blessedness, of an independence based on cooperation, haunts them all… Islands are also secret places, where the imagination never rests."

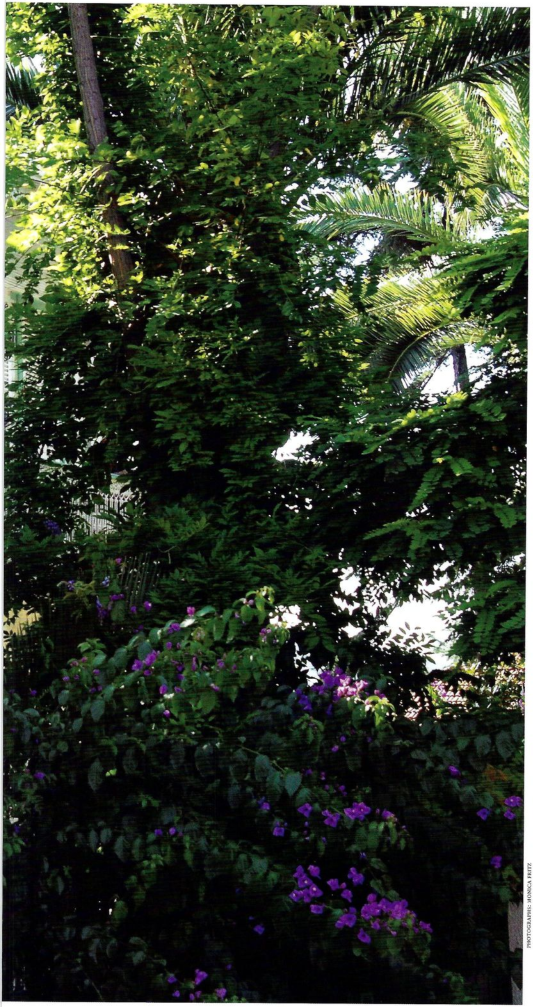
That remains true in our off-the-beaten-track corner of Büyükada. But the rest of the island has begun to change, faster and faster. Turkish soap operas filmed here and distributed around the Muslim world have made Büyükada a must-see destination for tens of thousands of Gulf and Levantine Arab visitors. This summer there were

OPPOSITE PAGE A CURTAIN CATCHES THE SUMMER BREEZE; THE NEOCLASSICAL PORTICO OF ONE OF THE CORPI FAMILY'S THREE 1888 HOUSES; OWEN MATTHEWS AT HIS DESK THIS PAGE A PIANO LESSON FOR OWEN'S SON THEODORE; SEEN FROM BÜYÜKADA, SEDEF ADASI IS THE SMALLEST OF THE INHABITED PRINCES ISLANDS, ABOUT A KILOMETRE LONG; THE QUAY OF THE CORPI HOUSES. THE LODOS, OR SOUTH WIND, IS THE MAIN THREAT TO BOATS, AND FERRY STATIONS ARE ALL ON THE NORTH SIDES OF THE ISLANDS

92 scheduled boats every day from various points in the city to Büyükada, eight times more than when we arrived. At weekends the village square is more crowded than İstiklâl Caddesi in central Istanbul. One Sunday in July, a horrified local told us, there was an hour-and-a-half wait for the ferry.

According to a 1994 edition of this magazine, Büyükada was suffering from cruel neglect and appeared to be in terminal, *fin-de siècle* decline. Now it suffers from its own popularity. For four months a year the city overflows into our secret paradise like a tide, leaving the woods and beaches with a shocking blanket of litter in its wake. But the tide recedes, as tides do, and the spell of loneliness and abandonment will be woven again, we hope. Each year, though, a shorter span. ◆

Owen Matthews is the author of 'Stalin's Children: Three Generations of Love and War' (2008) and 'Glorious Misadventures: Nikolai Rezanov and the Dream of Russian America' (2013), both published by Bloomsbury

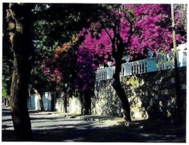


SIGHTS AND DELIGHTS OF AN ENCHANTED ISLAND

You should set aside a whole day to explore Büyükada, from the residential north of the island to the wilder, woodier south

The largest of the Princes Islands, Büyükada is also the most famous – at least among the huge numbers of Arab tourists who have started to visit in recent years – as the location for a clutch of Ottoman-themed soap operas filmed here and exported to the Middle East and Balkans by entrepreneurial Turkish producers. With its streets of white clapboard houses and not a car in sight, the island still looks like Istanbul a century ago, which explains its popularity with film-makers.

Büyükada has the grandest houses and the largest woodlands, but it also has the biggest crowds and the fish restaurants that are the worst rip-offs. Avoid summer weekends and holidays. Of late the horse-carriage drivers have rigged the prices of round-island tours



PHOTOGRAPHS: MONICA FRITZ

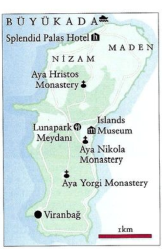
Left Afternoon tea on the balcony of a prettily painted wooden house Above Çankaya Caddesi, the street that runs through the prosperous neighbourhood of Nizam, west of the ferry station. Blooms cascade from terraces onto the street so that the short tour costs TL67 but the full-length tour lasting 75 minutes costs just TL79. They will try to talk you out of it, but of course take the latter, or take a phaeton one way and walk back. (For prices see adalar.bel.tr/fayton-tarifesi.asp.)

All the islands have bike-hire shops. On Büyükada **Sefa Bike** (23 Nisan Cad No 38, +90 532 548 4405) is recommended. Hills are steep, so have the brakes tested, and ask for a chain and lock in case you go exploring on foot. Watch for phaetons when gazing at houses on Çankaya Caddesi. And on the outskirts carry a couple of pebbles in your pocket in case you are chased by dogs.

Büyükada should be explored in two halves and distances are considerable, so you need a full day. In the north is the town with its *iskele* (ferry station), gardens and *köşks* (mansions); in the south, the woods and cliffs. The two meet in the middle at a busy crossroads, **Lunapark Meydanı** – named after a café that appears on 19th-century postcards – on the saddle between the two hills, **İsatepe** and **Yücetepe**.

SPLENDID SIGHTSEEING

When you step off the ferry, you are swept up Büyük İskele Caddesi into a small square with a clock tower, with the phaeton park on your left. The crowds of tourists will confuse even the hardened traveller. For a calm spot to get your bearings (and to drop off a suitcase) look for the twin cupolas of the **Splendid Palas Hotel** on 23 Nisan Caddesi (April 23 Avenue, marking National Sovereignty Day), on your right past the upper square where phaetons deposit passengers for the ferry back to the city. The hotel is at No 39. Just beyond it is the **Anatolian Club** (strictly for parliamentarians, though you can eat at its **Lavie Café**), the old Prinkipo Yacht Club, elegantly rebuilt with its mansard roofs after burning down in 1980.



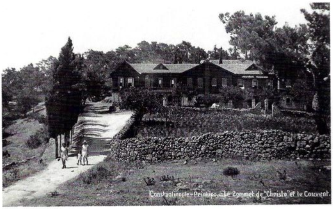
SUSANNA HICKLING

From the Splendid, you either turn left and make your way through the district of **Maden,** along **Çınar Caddesi** and **Yılmaz Türk Caddesi,** or right into the district of **Nizam,** following the long avenue that begins as **Çankaya Caddesi** and turns into **Nizam Caddesi.** As the crow flies, a third route, straight over the hill of İsatepe, is shorter but more taxing: **Kadıyoran Caddesi** (Exhausting-the-Judge Street) climbs the hill to the **Monastery of Hristos** above the town. From there it is a gentle stroll through woods past the ruins of the Rum Yetimhanesi (Greek Orphanage). The energetic might warm up with the climb to Hristos. Interesting houses along the way include the Hitchcockian Art Nouveau **Rizzo Mansion** (No 29), one of the 2015 Biennial venues, and the Neoclassical **Fadıl Bey Mansion** (No 82), near the top, where the wooden walls are painted oxblood red and carved to imitate blocks of dressed stone. Then test your bike's brakes by backtracking downhill for an easy pedal through Nizam, saving Maden for the return journey.

Nizam has many distinguished houses. Three to look out for are the **Hacopulo Mansion** (Çankaya Cad 44), at one point the Imperial Hotel; D'Aronco's quirky **Mizzi Mansion** (No 31); and the elaborately carved **Con Pasha Mansion** (No 78). Below these are the remains of the beautiful **İliasko Yalı Mansion,** where Trotsky lived in exile from 1929 – another Biennial venue in 2015.

From Lunapark, you can walk up to the **Monastery of Aya Yorgi** (St George), an 18th-century building on ninth-century foundations. There is a freshwater spring just below the summit of the hill, where every year on St George's Day (also April 23) thousands of Muslims and Christians alike make wishes. Pilgrims unwind threads behind them as they make the steep ascent; the tradition is one of the very few survivors not only of a shared Byzantine–Ottoman veneration but probably also of a pre-Christian fertility rite. From Aya Yorgi you can see the ruins of the **Rum Yetimhanesi,** the Prinkipo Greek Orthodox Orphanage, a giant wooden palace, now empty. It was designed by Alexander Vallaury as a luxury hotel and casino in 1898, but refused a licence by the sultan, who surmised it would turn into a den of iniquity. Eleni Zarifi, a wealthy widow, then bought it with a little help from the sultan, who admiringly called her "the Mother of Orphans". She paid 3,700 gold coins for it, and spent another 1,000 adding marble stairs in case of fire before giving it to the Greek patriarchate for use as an orphanage; 5,744 children were cared for there before it closed in 1964. At seven storeys, it is still the world's third-largest wooden building.

BURAK ÇETINTAŞ ARCHIVE


Constantinople-Prinkipo. — Le Sommet de "Christo" et le Couvent.

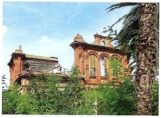
BURAK ÇETINTAŞ ARCHIVE

TOP A 19TH-CENTURY 'VAPUR'
LEFT THE HRISTOS MONASTERY, ABOVE THE TOWN OF BÜYÜKADA, ON A 1900S POSTCARD
ABOVE THE MONASTERY TODAY, UNCHANGED SINCE THE 1860S

TRANQUILLITY AND GENTILITY

The uninhabited southern end of the island is like an untainted pre-industrial Istanbul, with steep banks of strawberry trees, groves of cypress and pine, and views of the other islands. Follow the lane to the right of Lunapark along the southwestern side, past the rather too pushy **Eskibağ Gazinosu** (Old Vineyard Restaurant) to **Viranbağ** (the Abandoned Vineyard), just before you get to the cliffs at the far end. **Viranbağ** is Istanbul's most romantic *kır kahvesi* (country café) and the subject of a famous early-20th-century poem by Yahya Kemal. The only sound, apart from the waves far below

PHOTOGRAPHS: JOHN SCOTT



Top The Anatolian Club for parliamentarians, formerly the Prinkipo Yacht Club
Above left Ruins of the house that was Trotsky's in the early 1930s
Above Statues by Adrián Villar Rojas, erected at the end of Trotsky's garden for the Biennial in 2015

and the wind in the pines, is of passing phaetons. Hasan, the rugged old owner, took over when his mother died five years ago. He serves a domed salad worthy of the Waldorf Astoria, and crispy cheese *sigara böreği* (cigarette böreks) the size of fat cigars that go well with his ice-cold beer, rakı or very decent tea. A gate (locked out of season) leads to a cove at the foot of a cliff, where you can swim.

Avoid the gloomy southeastern side of the island, unless in a speedy phaeton, and retrace your steps past the strawberry trees to Lunapark. From there turn to follow the road back to town via the western district of Maden (or Mine – after old iron-ore works), for more fine mansions, such as those built by the Sapuncakis and Calvocoressis. On the way, allow time for the monastery of **Aya Nikola**, a charmed, untouched place, occasionally open, and above all for the **Museum of the Princes Islands** (adalarmuzesi.org), in an old helicopter hangar on the scrappy shore below. The information in it is encyclopaedic – from how the islands were cut adrift when the sea rose 60 metres in 12000 BC and the fault lines that threaten them (1894's earthquake created a tsunami that swept up the Golden Horn), to flora and fauna, trades and poets. The shop sells good books by an island publisher, Adalı (see below).

The **Splendid Palas**, simply known to most as the Splendid, is the timeless hotel of choice (book online at cornucopiahotels.com); out of season you could make do with the little-changed **İdeal Pansiyon** (Kadıyoran Cad 16).

The restaurant at Aya Yorgi (**Yücetepe Kır Gazinosu**, +90 216 382 1333) has the finest view on the islands, and perhaps in all Istanbul. The food is simple and fresh, the red wine local. The city stretches away into the mist to the north and east, while the sun sinks over the Sea of Marmara. As the sun drains from the day, the fleets of tankers and coastal steamers at anchor in the docks fade into the haze and you can almost imagine, after a bottle or two of the rough island wine, that Jason and his Argonauts are sailing through these straits, nervously eyeing each island they come to for signs of sirens, dragons or clashing rocks.

Best Books

Akillas Millas, who left the islands for Athens in 1980, has written two invaluable books with beautiful line drawings of buildings – one about Büyükada, the other about Heybeliada – in the series *Hala Hatırlıyorum / I Still Remember* (Adalı).

John Freely's lavishly illustrated *Princes' Islands* (Museum of the Princes Islands) and his pocket book *The Princes' Isles: A Guide* (Adalı) are packed with details of mansions and monasteries. His *Stamboul Sketches* (Eland Books) opens with the Armenian dentist's wooden castle near Hristos Monastery (still visible), built to ward off creditors.

Korhan Atay's *Adalar'da İz Bırakanlar / Those Who Left Marks on the Istanbul Islands* is a charming record of characters such as the great footballer Lefter Küçükandonyadis, who scored 423 goals in 615 games for Fenerbahçe; or Madam Martha, Turkey's first ballerina, who retired to a bay on the deserted south side of Burgaz, since named after her, swimming there summer and winter, walking barefoot through the snow.

Lawrence Goodman's Princes Island novels, and his wife MA Whitten's memoir, *An Island in Istanbul: At Home on Heybeliada* (all Adalı), are good light reads. ◆
For more travel notes and books visit cornucopia.net.

Even in high summer it is easy to escape the madding crowd – and the litter. Despite their apparent age, many of the intoxicatingly fragrant woods of Turkish pine (Pinus brutia) were planted in the early, idealistic years of the Republic. Old photos show rocky hillsides with vineyards in the valleys

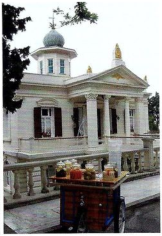
Monica Fritz

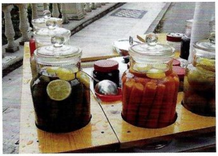
52
MALTEPE

PHOTOGRAPHS: MONICA FRITZ

Left A riot of bougainvillea seen through ornate iron gates. A bell is attached to alert the house to visitors
Below A catnap in an electric tricycle (elderly residents are now allowed to use these to negotiate the hills); an old-fashioned bike with a bunch of sage wrapped in newspaper – a parting gift from a neighbour's garden

Right The imposing wooden Kaymakamlik (Prefect's Office) on Çankaya Caddesi is ageing gently behind stately cedars. Built in 1870, its two conical towers once made it a landmark visible from the sea. The Anglophile bon vivant John Hacopulos bought it from one Madame Ermione in 1904, which is why guidebooks still call it the Hacopulo Mansion. During the 1919–23 Allied occupation, it became a hotel, the luxurious Hotel Impérial, one of the finest in the Near East
Below The Sapuncakis Köşkü, with its onion dome and temple portico, was built in 1904 by the architect Pericles Fotiadis for Abdülhamid II's interpreter, the Aleppo-born Yorgi Sapuncakis. Freemasonry symbols suggest that he used it as a masonic lodge
Bottom Colourful pickles on a barrow parked outside





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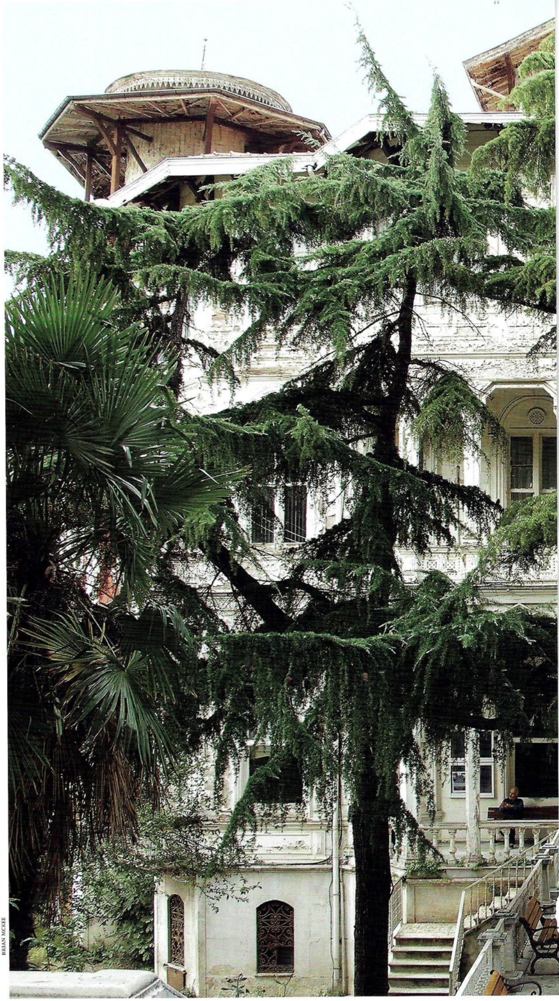
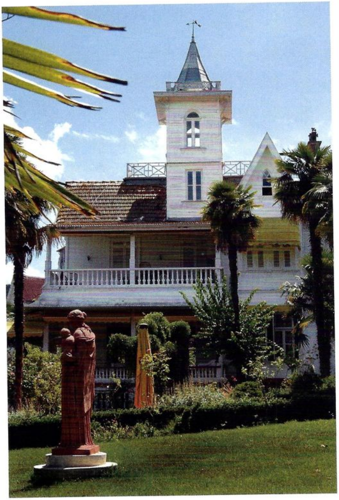
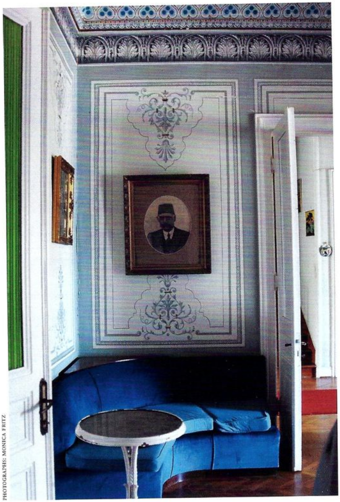


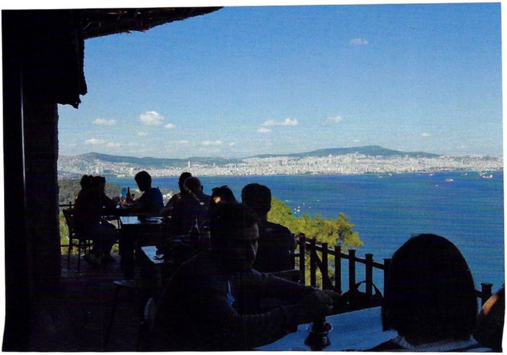
BRIAN MCKEE



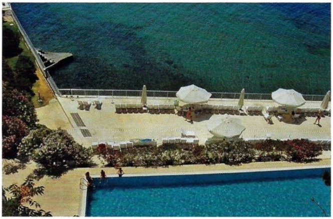


PHOTOGRAPHS: MONICA FRITZ

Above and above right The Kuyumcuyan Mansion, in the northwest corner of Nizam, built in 1852 for Mazlum Bey, an Ottoman interior minister's son. Above the verandah is a conical-roofed 'Cihannüma' (world's-view) tower
Right The panoramic view from Aya Yorgi's restaurant
Opposite Lace-like tracery awnings, Gothic windows and Art Nouveau arches, a typically eclectic mix of styles on a building next to the Anatolian Club. Many Büyükada flourishes, including elaborate tree motifs, come from the book 'Ideen von Olbrich', by Josef Maria Olbrich, and could easily be applied by carpenters as surface decoration

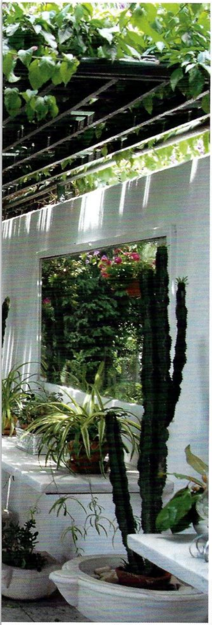


Above The outdoor dining room of a villa in Nizam built by Sedad Hakkı Eldem in 1957 for the businessman Rıza Derviş and his wife, Gerti, the German envoy Von Papen's wartime secretary
Right Many of Nizam's gardens drop steeply to the shore, where private quays offer a choice of sea or pool – the island wears its smartness discreetly, for all the tastelessness of the soap operas filmed here



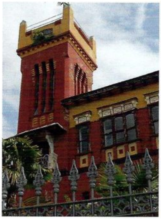
Monica Fritz

Opposite page, from top left The İdeal Pansiyon, open winter and summer, is a venerable Art Nouveau house on Kadıyoran Caddesi in the centre of town; the red-brick Jugendstil chateau (centre left) on Çankaya Caddesi was built in 1894 by the court architect Raimondo D'Aronco for a Maltese lawyer, Lewis Mizzi, chairman of the Prinkipo Yacht Club, who gained the property in lieu of legal fees and built the tower to pursue his love of stargazing

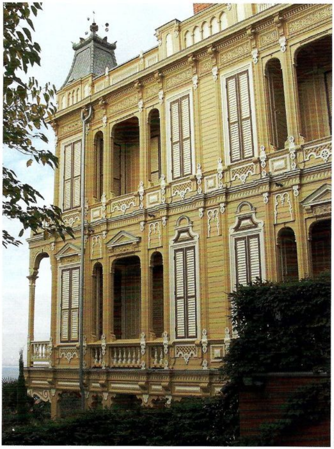


MONICA FRITZ

BURAK ÇETINTAŞ

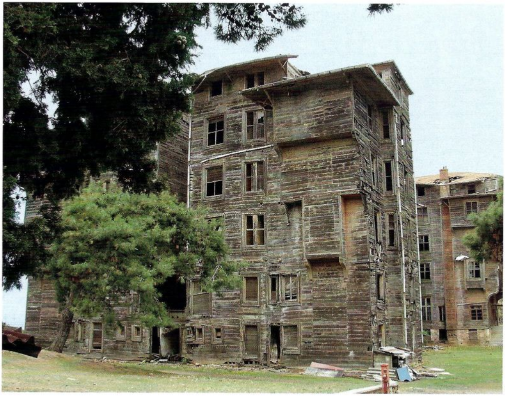


MONICA FRITZ

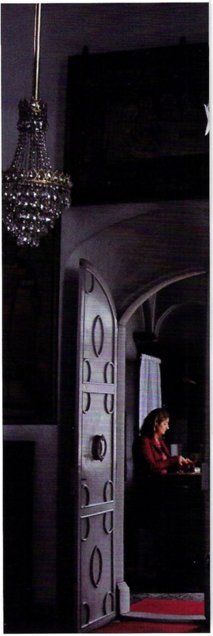


BRIAN MCKEE

Top right The Con Pasha Mansion, named after a director of the first city ferry line, John Avramidis Pasha, now restored by the shipowner and art collector Lucien Arkas
Right The Rum Yetimhanesi (Greek Orphanage) looming over Büyükada, and now derelict, is the world's third-tallest wooden building. The dream of a French hotelier, it was built in 1898 as the Prinkipo Palace Hotel and Casino but was refused a licence by Abdülhamid II



BRIAN MCKEE

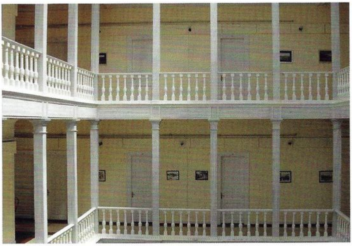


PHOTOGRAPHS: MONICA FRITZ

Top and main picture The most peaceful and untouched shrine on the Princes Islands is the church in the Monastery of Aya Nikola, patron saint of sailors, with its murals, fish lamps and gold hangings. It is on the eastern side of Büyükada, a stone's throw from the hubbub of Lunapark Meydani

Above left The Church of the Panagia in Araba Meydani, in the centre of town; its feast day, August 15, marks the dormition of the Virgin Mary; traces of an ancient cemetery are still visible
Left The Virgin Mary's much-kissed hand

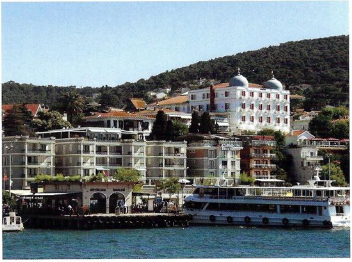
Left The main church at the hilltop Monastery of Aya Yorgi Koudounos (St George of the Bells), known simply as Aya Yorgi. A monastery on the site, destroyed either in the Fourth Crusade in 1203 or in a Venetian raid in 1302, was miraculously rediscovered in 1625 when a shepherd dug up an icon of St George after hearing the sound of bells coming out of the ground. It became a site where Muslims and Christians alike sought cures for the mentally ill, and is still a popular place of pilgrimage. Those attending the dawn service on April 23, St George's Day, traditionally walk barefoot on the stony path from Lunapark, the island's crossroads

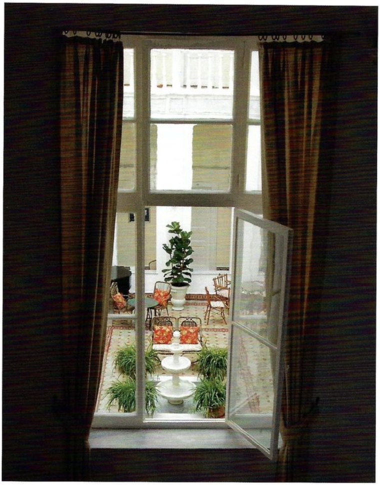


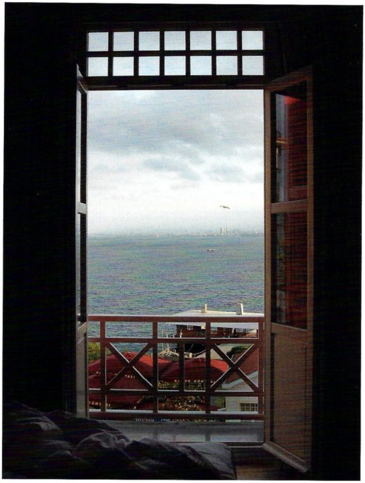
SPLENDID BY NAME…

… and splendid by nature, in a happy, unglitzy way. The Splendid Palas Hotel is still owned by a grandson of Sakızlı Kâzım Pasha, who built it in 1908. It was here that Atatürk was pictured in 1929 dancing with an adopted daughter at her wedding for the cover of *The Illustrated London News*, above the words "Turkey takes to 'all that ever went with evening dress'".

TOP THE HOTEL'S DOMES, INSPIRED BY THE NEGRESCO IN NICE, CONCEAL CISTERNS, WHICH WERE OF GREAT VALUE IN THE DAYS WHEN WATER HAD TO BE BROUGHT IN BY BOAT
ABOVE THE STATUES BY THE STEPS SURVIVE FROM ANOTHER FAMOUS ISLAND HOTEL, THE GIACOMO
ABOVE RIGHT THE INNER COURT
RIGHT THE VIEW FROM THE FERRY
OPPOSITE PAGE THE HOTEL IS AIRY, WITH BEAUTIFUL VIEWS







PHOTOGRAPHS: MONICA FRITZ

MONICA FRITZ

The view across to the suburb of Pendik from the restaurant at Aya Yorgi, showing Büyükada's fire tower in silhouette

Heybeliada

NOTES ON A SMALLER ISLAND

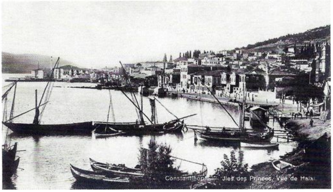
HEYBELİADA IS MORE COMPACT AND LESS SHOWY, BUT JUST AS FAIR

Heybeliada is the second-largest of the islands and there are dozens of good-looking mansions, many of them abandoned, along the main road, **Refah Şehitleri Caddesi**, which straddles the "saddle" between the two hills that give the island its Turkish name. Like its neighbour Büyükada, Heybeli, as it's often called – or Halki (Copper) in Greek – is a diocese on its own and boasts a handsome cathedral church in the centre of the village, **Aya Nikola** (St Nicholas).

Much more impressive and important for the Orthodox world, however, is the seminary of **Aya Triada** (Holy Trinity), which dominates the northern hill. It was once a leading theological centre before it was shut down during the Cyprus crisis in 1971. Though there are now no students, the place is still immaculately maintained, the classrooms swept and painted. The library still receives all periodicals, and a pair of priests serve daily in the cathedral church.

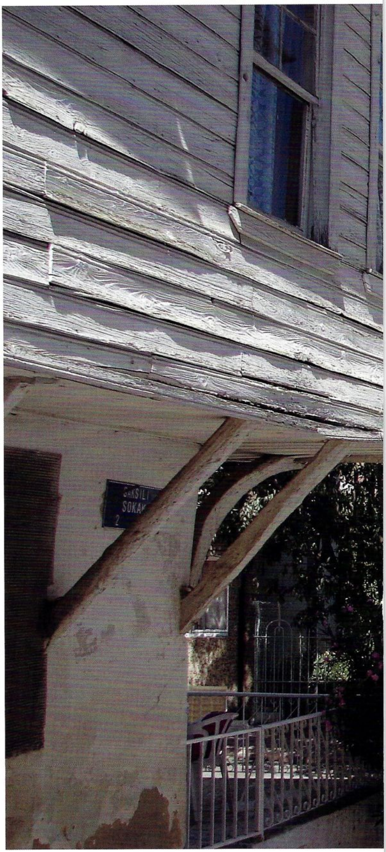
The most interesting church on the island is also, sadly, the hardest to visit – the late-Byzantine **Kamariotissa**, thought to be the last church built in Constantinople before the Turkish conquest of 1453. It stands on a high bluff in grounds belonging to the island's naval high school and is out of bounds to ordinary visitors.

The church's cemetery was also the last resting place of Sir Edward Barton, Elizabeth I's second ambassador to Ottoman Constantinople. Barton fled the city to Heybeli during an outbreak of plague in 1597 but actually carried it with him and died on the island. His gravestone was relocated in the 20th century to the Haydarpaşa Cemetery in Üsküdar.



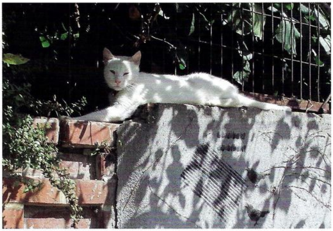
BURAK ÇETINTAŞ ARCHIVE

ABOVE THE QUAY C1900. AFTER THE NAVAL SCHOOL, IN THE DISTANCE, INCORPORATED THE HILLTOP GREEK COMMERCIAL SCHOOL, KETTLEDRUMS BECAME A FAMILIAR ISLAND SOUND



RIGHT A PHAETON DRIVES PAST REFAH ŞEHİTLERİ CADDESİ 46, THE SUMMER HOUSE OF KOSTAKİ ANTHOPULOS PASHA (1835–1902), OTTOMAN GOVERNOR OF CRETE AND AMBASSADOR TO LONDON

BURAK ÇETINTAŞ



CHOOSE YOUR PACE

Heybeli's charm lies partly in its scale. Its houses, like the island itself, are half the size of Büyükada's and more habitable in a typical Turkish way, with the emphasis less on grand airs than well-proportioned windows and airy rooms. The lie of the land, the streets and dense woods mean you can get pleasantly lost, but everything is within easy reach.

From the quay it takes five minutes to walk up behind the 1773 **Naval High School** to the empty **Sanatorium**, Turkey's first, built in 1924 to treat TB. There you find yourself in a pine forest, the sea far below, a blissful view of Büyükada ahead, and the only other person around a lad in a hut ready to toast a *çift kaşarlı* (double-cheese) sandwich. On the way you pass **Aya Yorgi tou Kremnou** (St George on the Cliff), its domes peaking prettily above high stone walls. The abbot, a highly educated Cappadocian monk, was a friend of Mahmud II (1808–39), a frequent visitor, who presented the monastery with the Koranic inscription "Salvation through frankness". A tour of the southern half of the island (the Büyük Tur, Big Tour) takes 40 minutes by phaeton

TOP THE WEDNESDAY MARKET
ABOVE LEFT THE MONASTERY OF ST SPYRIDON, AN ENCHANTING WOODEN CHURCH-WITHIN-A-CHURCH AT THE SOUTHERN TIP OF THE ISLAND KNOWN IN TURKISH AS TERK-İ DÜNYA (WORLD'S END)
ABOVE RIGHT A WHITE CAT STRETCHES OUT ON THE GARDEN WALL OF THE PALACE OF ABBAS HİLMİ PASHA

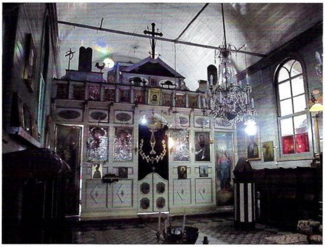
PHOTOGRAPHS: MONICA FRITZ

Top A spotless classroom in the seminary of Aya Triada
Above right The classic Ottoman stairs were built after an earthquake destroyed the original school in 1894
Above left The church behind the seminary dates from the 1840s

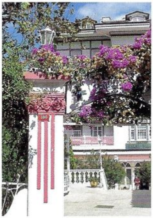
(with a 10-minute breather); it takes an hour on foot (without one). The Küçük Tur (Short Tour), around the northern hill below the seminary of Aya Triada, is less appealing – all you gain is scary views of the concrete city which the rest of the island is spared. One-way phaetons are an affordable luxury (TL35, or $12, to the farthest point). You might ride to the southern tip, to the **Monastery of St Spyridon,** known to phaeton drivers as **Terk-i Dünya** (World's End). Ask to be taken via **Çamlimanı Bay,** on the southeast of the island, the anchorage of choice for visiting yachts, then stroll back along the prettier, less hilly west side.

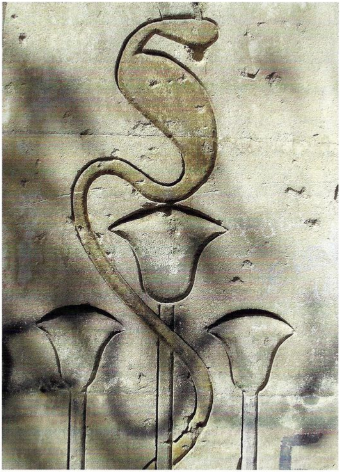
Aristotle tells the story of men from Kadıköy sailing over to Çamlimanı in 300BC to extract the copper. Today the red rock still has coppery green stains. The **Ada Beach Club,** at one end of the otherwise unloved bay, is a tempting place to swim, with a walkway on stilts under the cliffs.

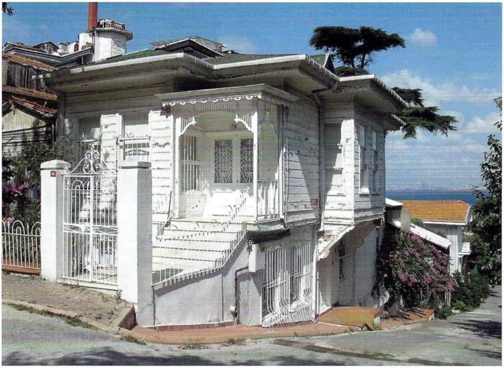
If you want to explore the island properly on foot, aim for Refah Şehitleri Caddesi when you step off the boat onto the esplanade lined with huge, agreeable cafés. These are best saved for the end, as ferries are



Above and opposite page The iconostasis and pulpit in St Spyridon, below a barrel vault like an upturned boat
Right The Halkİ Palas Hotel has lurid raspberry-pink gates but is a decent place to stay
Far right Carved lotus flowers and cobras adorn gateposts below the hotel, the only survivals of Abbas Hİlmİ Pasha's pharaonic palace overlooking Değİrmen Point
Below One of the many curious houses on Refah Şehİtlerİ. This one belonged to the Radoviç family







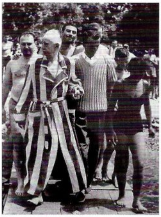
unforgivingly punctual, so get back early. Revive yourself at the ice-cream parlour **Tarihi Roma Dondurma** (Kışla Ardı Sok 4) facing the naval school (*sakızlı*, mastic, and *dutlu*, black mulberry, are especially good), then pick the café with the most ancient clientele. Behind the outdoor tables are gloomily cosy interiors with stoves and card tables covered in velvet cloths to sink your elbows into.

Behind the cafés is Çarşı Sokağı – market street – where you can buy a picnic (Wednesday is market day). Turn up past the large red **Church of Aya Nikola** for Lozan Zaferi Caddesi, which after a few bric-a-brac shops and an organic café becomes Refah Şehitleri Caddesi. At the top is the **Merit Halki Palas Hotel**, in an undelicious pink livery, built in 1856 for the parents of children at the new Greek Commercial School, now the upper campus of the Naval High School.

PHOTOGRAPHS: JOHN SCOTT

BURAK ÇETİNTAŞ ARCHIVE

FAR RIGHT THE LATE ŞİRİN DURUSOY ON A BIKE WITHOUT BRAKES IN 1941, PHOTOGRAPHED BY SELAHATTİN GİZ. HER FEARLESS SISTER, SEVİM, RIDES PILLION. WHITE RUSSIANS MADE BIKES POPULAR IN THE 1920S
ABOVE THE BYZANTINE CHURCH OF THE VIRGIN KAMARIOTISSA, IN THE COURTYARD OF THE FORMER GREEK COMMERCIAL SCHOOL, NOW PART OF THE NAVAL HIGH SCHOOL
RIGHT AND BELOW SWIMMERS ESCORT THE FORMER PRESIDENT İSMET İNÖNÜ TO THE 'PLAJ'
OPPOSITE, BELOW AN ELECTRIC TRIKE; THE HOUSE OF DELİ DİMİTRİ (MAD DİMİTRİ) ON FETTAH SOKAĞI



YAPI KREDİ SELAHATTİN GİZ ARCHIVE

THE ROAD TO WORLD'S END

There are many curious houses on Refah Şehitleri. The **İnönü House** (No 73) is now a museum, full of the Thirties wardrobes Atatürk gave to İsmet İnönü, the Republic's second president, with charming photos on the narrow stairs of him swimming. How modest were the tastes of presidents then! İnönü has his detractors, but he did keep Turkey out of the Second World War.

On the other side of the road, Abbas Paşa Sokağı leads down to dilapidated pillars, all that's left of a strange pharaonic palace built for Abbas Halim Pasha (1866–1935), an Egyptian prince, whose grand vizier brother, Said Halim Pasha, took Turkey into the First World War. His daughter tore it down in 1945, but the beautifully restored **Red House**, his *selamlık*, survives one street down, on **Fettah Sokağı**.

Below is **Değirmen Plajı**, Istanbul's first mixed-bathing beach, once popular with White Russians. The rickety platform from which İnönü made his famous feet-first jump has been replaced by something a helicopter could land on, but the view of the islands of Kaşıkadası and Burgaz beyond is lovely. Come back for a glorious sunset.

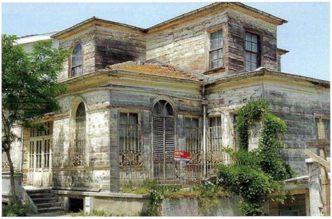
An ideal summer day should begin and end with a swim either in Çamlimanı or here. Avert your eyes from the ugly sports club hiding the windmill (*değirmen*) that gave the beach its name.

Refreshed, climb back up to Refah Şehitleri and head for the monastery poetically known as Terk-i Dünya – the Abandonment of the World. The view follows you all the way to the sprawling stables, soon to be replaced, just before you get to it. Terk-i Dünya occupies a dreamy spot on a rocky point, with tables on a terrace in front of the little church. Buy a candle, say a prayer and enjoy a picnic.

If the road is too tame, climb to the top of Baltacıoğlutepe, most southerly of Heybeli's hills. Right after the hilltop naval school, a new road, **Filiz Sokağı**, leads through the woods to the tiny **Church of the Metamorphosis of Christ** (Hristos Monastery). But look for a steep path on your left. At the top an enchanted forest path traces the island's spine through dense holly oak all the way to the monastery, never much more than a hermit's *skete*, now a ruin. Two energetic brothers, promised piped water this winter, plan to revive the old monastic orchard, even adding a café on the terrace.

Heybeli juts out into the sea like the prow of a boat. In winter the snowy peaks of Uludağ, ancient Mount Olympus of Bithynia, 100 kilometres south, look close enough to touch. ◆

PHOTOGRAPHS: MONICA FRITZ



BRIAN MCKEE

Fishing at dawn off Kinaliada, with Istanbul's haze of concrete beyond, the product of two decades of rampant development

KARA

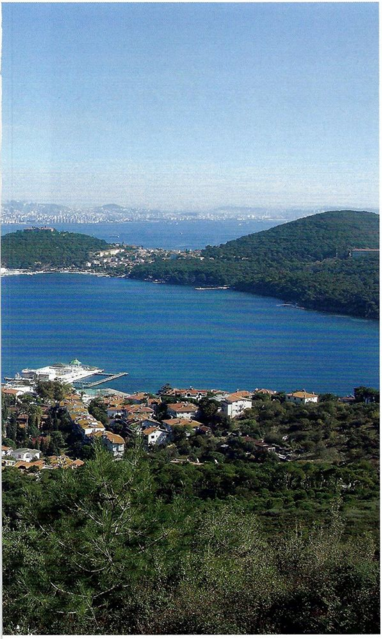
Burgazada

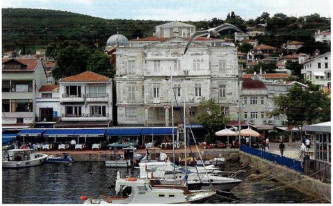
ONE-HILL BURGAZ

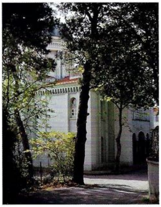
EXPLORE THE TOWN THAT CLINGS TO THE SINGLE HILLSIDE, CROSS THE ISLAND FOR LUNCH AT A HAUNT OF COIN-FORGERS AND A VIEW TO TAKE THE BREATH AWAY, THEN HIRE A PHAETON FOR A SCENIC RIDE BACK. BY HARRIET RIX. PHOTOGRAPHS BY BRIAN MCKEE

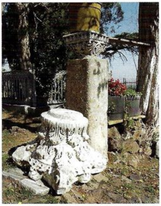
Like the other Princes Islands, Burgazada, known to Turks simply as Burgaz and to Greeks as Antigoni, has been subject to the vagaries of history. In more recent times it had its flush of fashion after a regular ferry service was established in the 1850s, its flash of intrigue and politics in the 1930s, when writers would take themselves into self-imposed exile there, and its moment of terror in 1955, when two commissars and their fellow Turkish townsmen, armed only with stones and a handful of guns, fought off ferryloads of thugs incited by the then prime minister, Adnan Menderes, to loot shops belonging to the minorities. It is now settling into a period of honourable passivity.

As the third-largest of the islands, it is comparatively ignored by tourists. The more imaginative are lured by the watchtower – the *pyrgos* after which the island was named – described and drawn by early travellers but now sadly gone.









But who could resist the Famous Five allure of Kalpazankaya, the Counterfeiter's Rock, at its westernmost tip, where *kalpazans*, false coiners, would stash their forged money?

You can walk everywhere on the island, but after exploring the sights on foot and walking across it for lunch with a view, we suggest that you hire a phaeton to take you back.

Assuming you wish to work up an appetite and dive straight into the town, the Greek **Church of Ayios Ioannis Prodromos** (St John the Baptist) is visible from the boat and easily reached. An impressive building with a dome supported on a high drum, it is enveloped in trees and patrolled by cats, which weave around extraordinary moss-coloured faux-marble pillars.

The current church was built in 1899 and is believed to be on the site of its eponymous Byzantine monastery, which by 1675 had "decaid and shrunk to a little church dedicated to St John", as the Rev John Covel put it. But the *ayazma* (holy spring) under its candy-striped glass could doubtless tell the mournful tale of the seven years spent by St Methodius the Confessor in what is now the church crypt after he protested against the iconoclasm of Michael II, the Stammerer (820–29). The Rev Alban Butler, writing in the 18th century, said that Methodius "was a Sicilian of high birth, and very learned", and noted that after his imprisonment he was given the Patriarchy of Constantinople by the Empress Theodora, in her role as regent

MAIN PICTURE THE VIEW FROM THE TOP OF BURGAZ, WITH HEYBELİ ON THE RIGHT AND THE SPOON-SHAPED KAŞIKADASI IN BETWEEN
TOP THE 1926 BURGAZ PALAS HOTEL IS NOW FLATS, BUT ITS AWNINGS STILL SHELTER POPULAR HAUNTS: THE CAFÉS ADA KEYF AND FINCAN AND THE MEYHANES BARBA YANİ AND ANTİGONİ
CENTRE U-TURNS ONLY ON THIS NARROW STREET CORNER
ABOVE LEFT THE ORTHODOX CHURCH OF ST JOHN THE BAPTIST
ABOVE RIGHT A CAPITAL WORTHY OF A BYZANTINE EMPEROR

PHOTOGRAPHS: BRIAN MCKEE

for her son Michael III, in AD842.

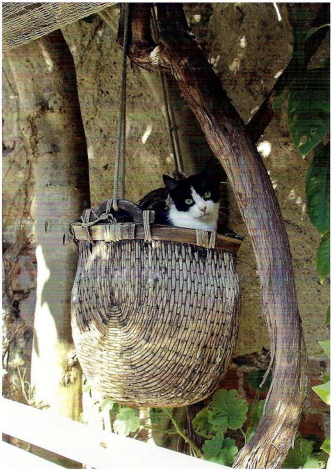
Going up the hill slightly behind the church, you come to the **Spanudis Köşkü** at Çayır Aralığı Sokağı 15, which is now a small museum dedicated to Sait Faik Abasıyanık. The writer celebrated as "the Turkish Chekhov" lived in the house from 1934 until his death in 1954, and his short stories are full of the sea and a mystical "ship of one's dreams, one's remembrances, full of waves, storms, forbidden seas, strange fish, and unusual people". His books are an extraordinary mixture of romanticism and grime, portraying the emotions and sensibilities of any who could be considered pawns of fortune – fishermen, labourers and vagabonds (see p36 for a review of *A Useless Man*, a new collection of his short stories in translation). The museum is open from 10.30am to 6.30pm (Wed–Sun, saitfaikmuzesi.org) and is a very pleasant introduction to the man and his circle.

ARA GÜLER

ABOVE THE CHURCH OF THE TRANSFIGURATION STANDS AMONG THE MONASTERY'S RUINS
LEFT SAİT FAİK, THE MUCH-LOVED 'TURKISH CHEKHOV', BY ARA GÜLER
OPPOSITE, FROM TOP A BURGAZ-STYLE CAT'S CRADLE; THE SOUTH DOOR OF ST JOHN THE BAPTIST; A STELA CARVED WITH PARTRIDGES

Heading on up through the town, you may wonder at the futility of his protests against a wealthy, leisured class, as many stately old mansions survive, smothered in bougainvillea and surrounded by fig trees. These end abruptly a little way up **Hristos Tepesi**, the Hill of Christ, and the hillside opens out into an expanse of rockrose (*Cistus x cyprius*) with numerous bulbs growing beneath, notably the pretty autumn squill.

After a fairly stiff climb, with a superb view of the other islands (the spoon shape of Kaşıkadası, literally Spoon Island, is striking),



one reaches the bell tower of the Greek church and old Byzantine **Monastery of Theokoryphotos** (the Transfiguration of Christ), supposedly founded by Basil the Macedonian.

Preserved in the National Library of Spain in Madrid, the wonderful manuscript *Skylitzes Matritensis*, a *Rake's Progress* for Byzantine emperors, shows Basil rising from his obscure peasant origins in Macedonia as he captures first Michael III's attention (by tossing a Bulgarian wrestling champion nonchalantly over a table), and secondly his crown (as he approaches to be crowned co-emperor, stony-faced, on a prancing white stallion). On September 24, 867, Basil murdered Michael and his new favourite, Basiliskianos, and took the throne outright, but in spite of these inauspicious beginnings he became a great lawgiver and patron of the arts in the 19 years of his reign, and was particularly Orthodox and pious.

Little of the monastery remains and its history is hard to trace, but in 1158 Manuel Comnenus issued a chrysobull protecting its monastic rights, and Petrus Gyllius records it as virtually intact in 1547. By the end of the 18th century it was derelict, and the new church was built within the ruins in 1868.

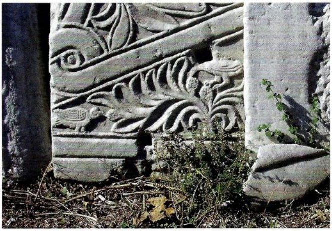
Today it can need a little persistence to gain entry to the enclosure (although the fence is down in several places), but it is definitely worth it to see the ruins closer up, as well as the four huge cisterns, which are still in order. There are also very pretty examples of Byzantine stonework, in particular four finely carved capitals which probably date from the 1100s. An inscribed stela carved with partridges and fragments of architrave, squinch and cornice are arranged around the courtyard, and the vine winding over the door completes the hilltop's picturesque air. The church is rarely used now, save on the *panigiri* (feast) of the Transfiguration on August 6, but the graveyard, full of Greek, Armenian and German inscriptions, is under renovation. The **Chapel of St Elijah** could do with a crow or two to relieve its air of sterility, but amaryllis flowers and the odd flamboyant or poignant grave make it strangely compelling.

Coming down the other side of the hill, you follow a track through pine and strawberry trees (*Arbutus unedo*) until you reach a road, after which a left turn takes you through a small farm straight out of one of Sait Faik's stories, and then onward to Kalpazankaya. A friend insists that the Rev John Covel's 1677 review of the Burgaz food – "The wine is ordinary… the water very bad; bread dear and not very good" – still holds, but not a bit of it! Long tables on the terrace of the restaurant here, unmissable views, a convenient swimming spot, and the best sort of food mean that the phaeton trip back will be later than planned.

Ask to return via Gönüllü Caddesi, and the enchanting **Monastery of Aya Yorgi Karyptis**, which is set among pines and occupied mainly by cats. It is rarely open but, if it is, you will find that the iconostasis in the church, which was carved in 1818 by "Joachim, a monk from Crete", is very beautiful. The monastery was apparently Byzantine, and evidently well known enough by the second half of the 17th century that the Greek innkeepers of Istanbul decided to restore and maintain it, preserving its original layout.

Some vast architectural fantasies along Gönüllü Caddesi are worth looking out for among the blue plumbago, and almost all can be linked with a significant figure from the last century, but if you have time it is worth making small pilgrimages to see the houses of two of the most interesting inhabitants. Filip Lenas, founder of the legendary Istanbul Baylan patisseries, used to take time out at Barbaros Hayrettin Caddesi 12, and the novelist and champion of women's rights Halide Edib Adıvar moved to **Zafiriadis Evi** at Mehtap Sokağı 41.

As she explained in *The House with Wisteria*, "I went there sick, but found my spiritual balance as well as my physical. I lived among the beauty and daily pleasures given to man through nature… We would climb up to the pine grove on donkeys, and I would eat, drink, and virtually live there all day." ◆

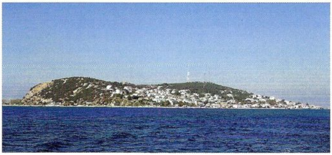


JOHN SCOTT

Kınalıada

ECHOES OF A GOLDEN AGE

THE FIRST FERRY STOP, KINALIADA MAY BE CROWNED WITH PHONE MASTS, BUT IT IS STEEPED IN HISTORY AND INTRIGUE, WRITES HARRIET RIX



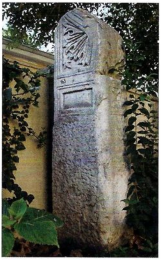
PHOTOGRAPHS: BRIAN MCKEE

Men will try very hard to sell you *çay*, *simit* and potato peelers on the boat to the Princes Islands, so it can be a relief to leave them behind by disembarking at Kınalıada (Henna Island), or Proti (First) in Greek, as it is the first of the Princes Islands to be reached from Istanbul.

The island looks quite barren – any springs that once existed have failed – and in the past the first thing most seasonal visitors did when they arrived at their houses was to go down to the cistern and carefully record the water level. In rare cases these family records of the rainfall go back as far as the 1880s, when the population burgeoned. The cisterns that were dug beneath the new houses revealed many Byzantine remains – a reminder of a golden age when three monasteries squabbled over interpretations of the Apocrypha, and deposed potentates were regularly sent to add their prayers to the petitions of the monks.

The age of Byzantium is evoked as soon as one leaves the boat and walks up the hilly road to the Greek Orthodox **Church of Genissa Panagia Theotoku** (the Birth of the Holy Mother of God). Outside the church is an enormous Byzantine pillar and a sixth-century capital similar to those found in Ayasofya. Both were unearthed when the present church was built in 1886, indicating that this may have been the site of the ancient Monastery of the Holy Virgin.

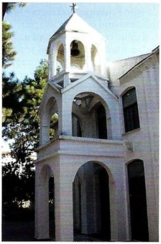
The monastery acted as prison or sanctuary for two of the most exciting Byzantine empresses – Theodosia and Theophano.



Opposite page, from top Kinaliada, seen here from the ferry, with the Monastery of the Transfiguration at the top of the hill, is unique in that nothing stands between the town and the beach; the island seen from a distance
Left and above A 6th-century capital and a Byzantine bracket in the garden of the Greek Panagia Church
Right The Armenian Church of St Gregory the Illuminator, rebuilt in 1988
Below A cart on the seafront that in summer sells 'lokma', delicious crunchy dough balls, to hungry swimmers

Theodosia was dispatched to the monastery with her four children and the remains of her husband, Leo V, after his assassination by Michael the Stammerer during Christmas mass, and Theophano was banished by her lover, the new Emperor John Tzimiskes, after they together murdered her second husband (the Emperor Nicephorus II Phocas).

Theophano appears to have been a *femme fatale* in more ways than one – her first husband, Romanus II, risked rebellion when he married her, a courtesan, and both his death and his father's were rumoured to be her doing. This was probably unfair, as she had nothing to gain from Romanus's death, but the slander persisted and was reinforced by Gibbon, who wrote that "After a reign of four years, she mingled for her husband the same deadly draught which she had composed for his father."



The modern church itself, by contrast, has a peace broken only by its rowdy *panigiri* (feast) on October 7–8. It has icons of varying beauty in its three aisles, but looks and feels like a gentle provincial place of worship.

Up the hill, past holly oaks (host to the cochineal bug, used to make red carmine dye) and giant fennel plants, you come to the active **Monastery of the Transfiguration of Christ**, a Neoclassical building which can be visited on Mondays. Paid for by mastic merchants from Chios in 1722, its unadorned looks resulted from damage by a

British bombardment during an unsuccessful siege of the island in 1807, a campaign foreshadowing Gallipoli. It stands on the site of an earlier monastery, where at least three Byzantine emperors were exiled after being deposed in varying states of decrepitude and despair.

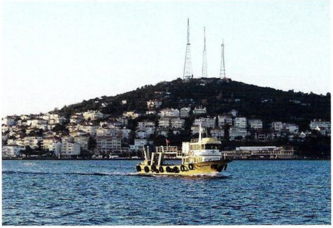
Michael I Rhangabe would, at least, have been used to the sea – his father had been admiral of the Aegean fleet – and he was probably liked by the monks, as he had persecuted Iconoclasts and been very generous to the Church. He was exiled to the monastery in 813, during a disastrous campaign against the Bulgarians, by his general, Leo (who became Leo V), along with his wife Prokopia and their four children, and one can imagine him quite content. He lived at any rate until 840, and his son Niketas, who had been castrated at the time of their exile, went on to be twice Patriarch Ignatius of Constantinople, and was canonised pre-congregationally.

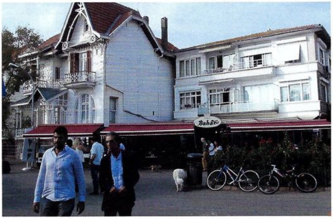
Romanus I Lecapenus, who rode to power on the wave of another Bulgarian campaign, was also fond of the sea (he had served as admiral of the fleet), and he too may not have found the monastic life a grave burden. He was known as "the gentle usurper" for bypassing Constantine VII, the legitimate emperor, rather than exiling or killing him, but was racked with guilt nonetheless, and had considered abdication and the monastic life even before his sons pre-empted the matter by forcibly carrying him off. In what must have been an awkward family reunion, they were themselves exiled here shortly afterwards.

Romanus IV Diogenes, however, who was exiled in 1072, was a far more tragic example of the barbarities of the Byzantines. He was a figure of some romance who married the dowager Empress Eudokia Makrembolitissa in defiance of an oath she had sworn to her dying husband, Constantine X Doukas. He left soon after their wedding to lead the once-great, now degenerate Byzantine armies against the Seljuk Turks, who were sweeping across Cappadocia. Captured in the Battle of Manzikert, after being betrayed by a member of the Doukas family, he was ransomed but then cheated and blinded by his stepson and successor, Michael VII Doukas, who sent him to the monastery, where he died from an infection in his wounded eyes.

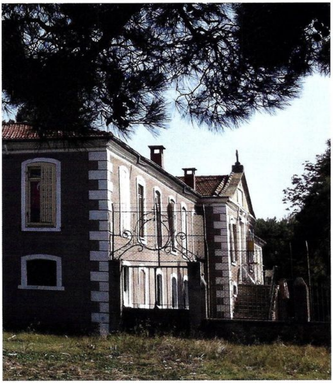
Even this reflection is hardly enough to spoil the magical view through the pines of the wooded side of the island, and beyond it the curiously pointed island of Sivriada. The northern shore of Kınalıada is a lovely place to swim, with its pebble beaches and little coves, and when the town's beach is whipped up by a north wind, a small pilgrimage of locals will head over the hill with beach towels to the sheltered side of the island.

Retracing your steps and re-entering the village down the hill, take a left just before the sea (perhaps buying something from the fruit van on your way) and go to the shop with the orange awning on the right, where mussels coated in batter are tossed into boiling oil and put inside a finger bun with lashings of very garlicky, nutty *tarator* sauce. These are the *madeleine* equivalent for many children,


BRIAN MCKEE



JOHN SCOTT


HARRIET RIX

TOP A MARMARA FISHING BOAT TURNED PLEASURE CRUISER SAILS PAST KINALIADA

ABOVE LEFT BAHAR PASTANESİ, OPPOSITE THE FERRY STATION, A HISTORIC RENDEZVOUS WITH GOOD PASTRIES AND MEMORABLE LEMONADE. A SECOND BAHAR, FOR MORE RETIRING LOCALS, IS ON ÇARŞI SOKAĞI, ONE STREET BACK FROM THE SEA. THE ISLANDERS RESOLUTELY REFUSE TO ALLOW PHAETONS

LEFT THE GREEK ORTHODOX MONASTERY OF THE TRANSFIGURATION LOOKS NORTH AND SOUTH FROM KINALIADA'S MIDDLE HILL. IT WAS IN AN EARLIER MONASTERY ON THE SAME SPOT THAT BYZANTINE RULERS FACED EXILE. THE PRESENT BUILDING DATES FROM THE 1720S BUT WAS DAMAGED WHEN IT WAS BOMBARDED BY THE BRITISH NAVY IN 1807

OPPOSITE GLEAMING CLAPBOARD APARTMENTS LOOKING OUT TO SEA

BRIAN MCKEE

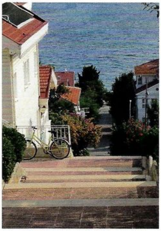
PHOTOGRAPHS: BRIAN MCKEE

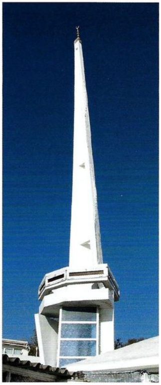
particularly those of Istanbul's Armenian community – a treat bestowed by indulgent grandmothers on summer evenings. The *döner* man at No 17 is also a favourite, and for pudding the *lokma* barrow sellers whip out sweet, crunchy golden dough balls generously laced with cinnamon with the air of miracle workers.

Their pitch is just outside the remarkable Proti Mosque – a rare example of a truly modern mosque, designed in the 1950s with a restaurant and a supermarket, rather than the traditional hamam and medrese, by Başar Acarlı and Turhan Uyaroğlu. They eschewed a dome in favour of two pitched roofs linked by stained glass with a simple flower pattern. The vision behind their design is revealed when you enter – the small, dark room can hold at most a hundred people, but the pitched ceiling is flooded with light, a dramatic reminder of illumination from above. The symbolism is equally clear in the design of the minaret, a free-standing shard that pierces the sky in a resolutely avant-garde manner, much more like the "gate from heaven to earth" described in Arabic liturgy than many of its rotund ancestors.

Much more old-fashioned is the green awning of **Bahar** (Turkish for "spring"), a charming café opposite the boat station where everyone meets to sip the house *limonata*. This looks like a witches' brew, a lurid synthetic yellow, bubbling in its cooler inside the shop; in fact it is made of entirely natural ingredients to the shop's own recipe, and it has the bitterness of grated lemon zest, which lifts it above the ordinary.

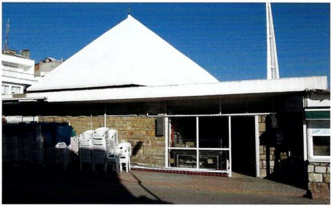
The Art Nouveau café past the *iskele* (just opposite another monumental sixth-century Byzantine pillar, used as a trough for local cats) is interesting for more intellectual reasons: it once resounded with the chatter of a group that included the designer İhap Hulusi Görey, "the man who illustrated the Republic". He revolutionised the design world in Turkey and has left an indelible legacy in the branding of toothpaste, alcohol and coffee – Kurukahveci Mehmet Efendi still uses his designs. State lottery tickets were his bread and butter (he designed them for 45 years), but he is best remembered for his illustrations of Atatürk teaching the Latin alphabet to a little girl, the propaganda that encouraged the adoption of the new script.

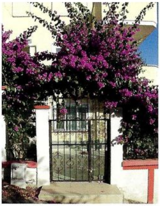


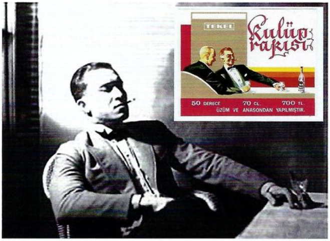


Perhaps the designer found the café's yellow and green stained glass more conducive to his vision for a new Turkey than the delightful street further on from the pier, Fazıl Ahmet Aykaç Caddesi, a line of curiously rustic houses of which his is the prettiest, an earth-red *köşk* with gingerbread embellishments.

The Armenian composer Gomidas lived on the same street from 1909 to 1913. His divine liturgy is still used by the Armenian Orthodox Church, and it is partly as a result of his fame that the funds were raised to rebuild the island's 19th-century Armenian Church of St Gregory the Illuminator in 1988.

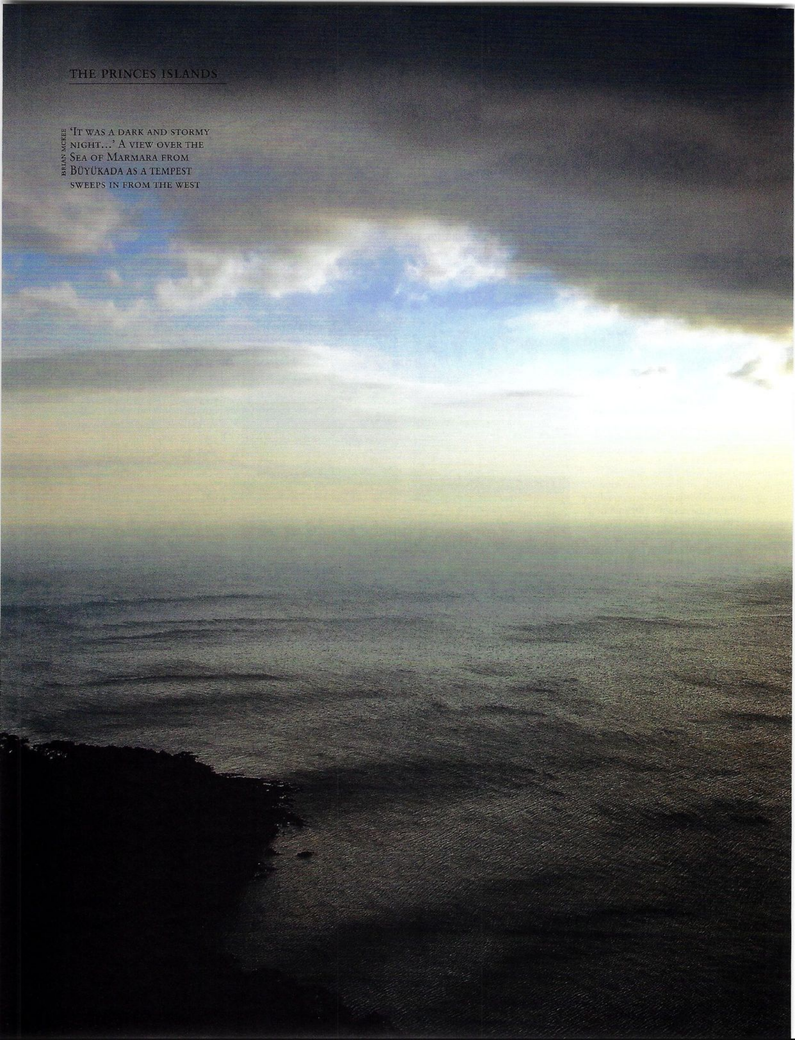





TEKEL
Kulüp Rakısı
50 DERECE
70 CL.
700 TL.
ÜZÜM VE ANASONDAN YAPILMIŞTIR.

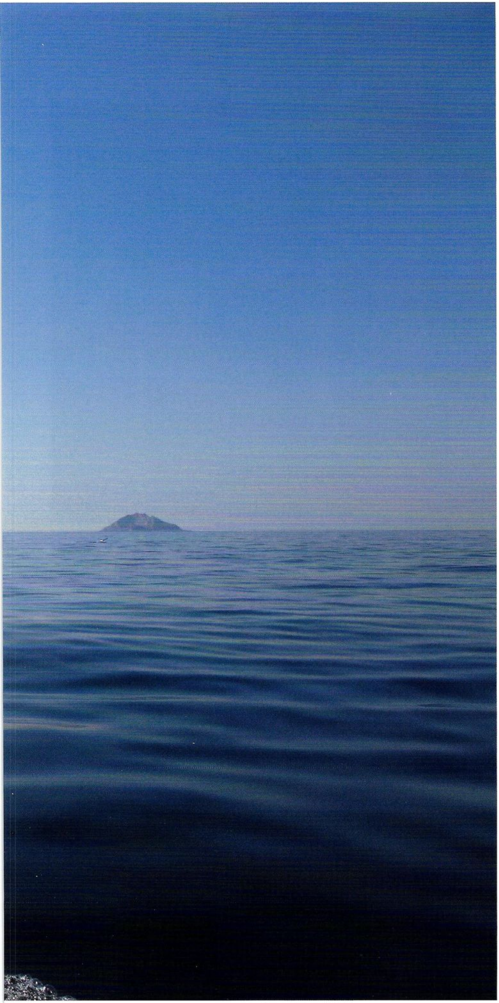
OPPOSITE One of the early-1900s Twin İzkon Sirakyan Houses on the seafront
ABOVE AND TOP RIGHT The 1956 Proti Mosque, a rare example of modern mosque architecture
TOP LEFT The town's streets rise in steep tiers
ABOVE RIGHT Bougainvillea softens the harder edges
LEFT İhap Hulusi's famous label for Kulüp Rakı (inset) shows the artist in profile with his Kınalı neighbour, the poet Fazıl Ahmet Aykaç, seen here in a preparatory photo. The setting is the Anatolian Club on Büyükada

Above this street is a road that gives a glimpse of the island in all its sterility. The maquis is full of butterflies, but otherwise it is easy to see why John Covel lamented in the 17th century that it was "rocky, barren ground" or why, as one sails away in the evening sun, the island glows red, the "dyed with henna" effect from which Kınalıada got its name. ◆



BRIAN MCKEE

'It was a dark and stormy night…' A view over the Sea of Marmara from Büyükada as a tempest sweeps in from the west



THE GHOSTS OF YASSIADA

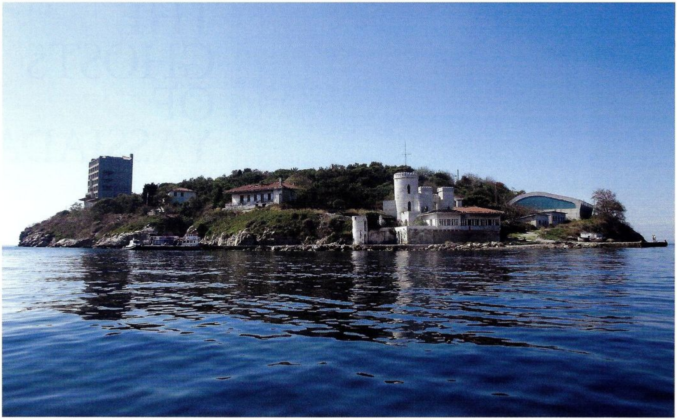
Within clear sight of teeming Istanbul lies an island of silence, one of the most haunted and haunting places on earth. Before the developers move in, Owen Matthews returns to lonely Yassiada

There is a unique sort of loneliness to the deserted island of Yassıada. The place is desolate and dotted with ruined buildings; the only sounds are the sea-wind and the occasional barking of a pair of Alsatian guard dogs. And yet a great city is all around, across just five kilometres of sea. At any given moment millions of eyes are looking – probably without much curiosity – across the water at Yassıada and its sister island of Sivriada. They are the most visible of the Princes Islands, and the closest to Istanbul. Both are uninhabited, and until 2012 Yassıada was officially an out-of-bounds military zone, an island of secrets and unhappy memories. It is, without doubt, the most haunting and haunted place I have ever been.

The strangeness of Yassıada is immediately evident even as one approaches from the sea. A pair of crenellated white towers and a wall pierced with pointed neo-Gothic arches flank the deep-water harbour. The effect is something like an abandoned film set, or *The Black Island* of Tintin's Scottish adventure. In fact these faux fortifications are the remains of two Gothic follies built on the island by Sir Henry Bulwer, Queen Victoria's

A swimming party sets off aboard Owen Matthews's boat, Clio, for the limpid waters off Yassiada (Flat Island). On the right is Sİvrİada (Pointed Island). The Greek names of the two islands, Plati and Oxia, have the same meanings

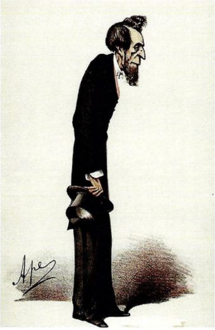
OWEN MATTHEWS



ambassador to the Sublime Porte.

Bulwer bought Yassıada in 1857 and had the follies built as a place to hold lavish parties. The ambassador would greet his guests from the fantastic gatehouse as they arrived from the city by caique. They would then be entertained to dinner in a little neo-Moorish castle that still stands in the centre of the island. Locals whispered of orgies and satanic rituals – but given Bulwer's otherwise fairly blameless life it seems hard to believe. An 1870 *Vanity Fair* caricature by Ape shows Bulwer as "a superannuated diplomat" and the very picture of Victorian rectitude – though he did take Eurydice Aristarchi, the Princess of Samos, as his mistress (she was an exotic and clever woman, intimate with the sultan's court and the gossip of the harem, who ended up expelled from Constantinople as a Russian agent in 1877). It was Bulwer's younger brother, the statesman and novelist Edward Bulwer-Lytton, who was the truly eccentric member of the family – he had an interest in the occult and is remembered as the author of the famous opening words, "It was a dark and stormy night…"

At the end of his assignment Bulwer sold Yassıada at a large profit to Ismail Pasha, Khedive of Ottoman Egypt and Sudan. But instead of developing the island as a personal playground, the Khedive apparently forgot about his new bauble and abandoned Yassıada to decay. *Murray's Handbook*, published in 1892 for the benefit of tourists arriving on the new Orient Express, describes a "dilapidated Anglo-Saxon castle" and dismisses the island as being of little interest.



Above Sir Henry Bulwer in Vanity Fair's portrait of 'A superannuated diplomat' Top Bulwer bought Yassiada from the sultan when he was Britain's ambassador, and built himself this castle. On the far right is the 1950s

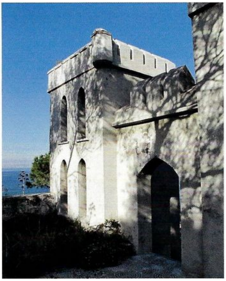
A neatly cobbled pathway winds from Bulwer's whitewashed gatehouses past a series of villas and barracks. They are in various stages of ruin, overrun by creepers, their floors strewn with broken glass and the remains of picnickers' campfires. The buildings bear the unmistakable stamp of mediocre military architecture. They were put up between 1947 and 1994 by the navy, which used Yassıada as an annexe to the Naval Academy on nearby Heybeliada.

A few hundred yards to the right of the gatehouse is a large modernist concrete structure that looks like a sports hall. Inside, the walls are dotted with basketball hoops, and some half-rotten climbing ropes hang from the ceiling; one side is a rising bank of numbered concrete seats. But this building was originally created for a much more sinister purpose than indoor sports. The unusual graffiti covering the inside of the hall give a clue to its real purpose: "Yassı Island will be a Democracy island," someone has written in two-metre-high multicoloured letters, and elsewhere is the old Spanish Republican slogan "*No Pasarán!*" This hall was purpose built for the trial of the Turkish prime minister Adnan Menderes and his top ministers in the wake of a military coup in May 1960.

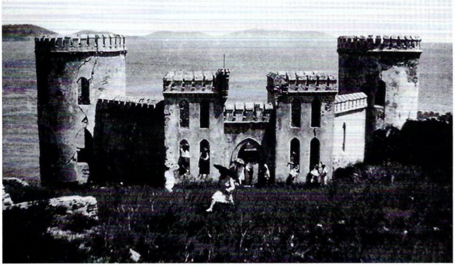
The barracks where the Democrat Party parliamentarians were held are now a jungle of wild fig trees and prickly sage bushes. The cobbles are covered in fallen tiles stamped "Bursa 1947". Giant agaves – huge triffid-like plants with leathery leaves thick as a man's arm, tipped with long black spikes – have pushed up among the paving stones. The oldest plants are monsters measuring five metres across. They flower just once in their lifetime, aged between 30 and 40 years, by sending up a single towering "mast" topped with a strange crown-like flower. The agaves then die, leaving their sprawling dried skeletons dotted across the island.

The overall effect is post-apocalyptic. There are over 150 different structures on Yassıada (someone has numbered them with a stencil and spray paint). The most desolate are a pair of seven-storey buildings dating from the 1980s during a short-lived expansion of the Naval Academy. These are the stumpy white buildings one can see from the mainland. Close up they are a wilderness of broken glass and wrecked furniture. The lower floors are a maze of vandalised kitchens, shower rooms, refectories and sports halls.

The strangest spot on the island is on the roof of a nearby building: a perfectly hemispherical chamber some ten metres across. From the outside it looks like an observatory, but there is no aperture in the roof from which to point a telescope. The dome has sinister acoustics: a whisper carries with weird clarity to the middle of the chamber; a shout booms out, unnaturally amplified. What the

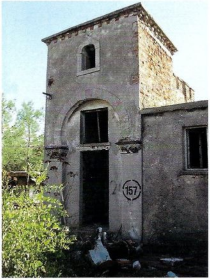


LEFT AND BOTTOM ROW THE REMAINS OF THE CASTLE IN 2014. BULWER'S INTENTION WAS TO USE THE ISLAND AS A MARKET GARDEN. BUT HIS NOTORIOUS AFFAIR WITH EURYDICE ARISTARCHI, GREEK PRINCESS OF SAMOS, MUCH COURTED BY AMBASSADORS AND IN THE 1870S EXPELLED AS A RUSSIAN SPY, LED TO RUMOURS OF MORE EXCITING GOINGS-ON



BELOW THE GATEHOUSE RUINS IN THE 1930S. AFTER PLACING AN ADVERTISEMENT IN 'THE TIMES', BULWER SOLD THE ISLAND AT A HUGE PROFIT TO THE KHEDIVE OF EGYPT AND SUDAN, WHO SEEMS TO HAVE TAKEN LITTLE INTEREST IN IT. 'MURRAY'S HANDBOOK' IN 1892 DESCRIBED THE 'ANGLO-SAXON CASTLE' AS 'DILAPIDATED', BUT IT REMAINED A POPULAR PLACE FOR PICNIC PARTIES

BURAK ÇETINTAŞ ARCHIVE



PHOTOGRAPHS: OWEN MATTHEWS

dome is for is a complete mystery.

There are magical places too. A small landing stage at the far side of the island is reached down a long stairway cut into the cliff face. The iron railings are now crazily twisted. At the bottom is a deep little bay with the purest blue water I have ever seen anywhere on the islands and a concrete dock, perfect for sunbathing. At the western tip of Yassıada, looking out across the Marmara Sea away from the city, there's a lonely little sentry post surrounded by flowering grasses and utter silence. The Gothic aspect of Bulwer's castle, meanwhile, belies its more recent use: the interior has been turned into a hamam and mosque. The original paint still clings to the faux-Moorish doorway, and the crenellations and Gothic windows are still in place. The courtyard has been taken over by the hugest fig tree, a giant with ten-metre branches curling around the building like an octopus. Nearby, in 1960s-era barracks, there is a series of naive wall paintings depicting heroic Turkish soldiers accompanied by patriotic slogans such as *"Önce Vatan"*, which roughly translates as "Country First".

There are also a few traces of the older history of Yassıada to be seen, if you look hard enough. The Princes Islands, as the name suggests, were a place of exile for deposed Byzantine royalty. But they were also an important centre of monasticism. There are records of monasteries on almost every one of the islands – including the tiniest of them, the 0.27 sq km Neandros, off the southern tip of Büyükada. Yassıada's monastery was founded in the ninth century by St Ignatius, twice Patriarch of Constantinople. A listing of the city's monasteries drawn up by the Emperor Manuel I Comnenus in 1158 mentions a *katholikon*, or monastery-cathedral, dedicated to the Forty Martyrs, and a chapel of the Virgin. The remains of Byzantine brickwork – probably a cistern – can be seen near the courtroom, but the principal ruins seem to be lost under more modern constructions.

A grander monastery once stood just north of Yassıada on Sivriada, part of the great foundation of St John of Studion, Constantinople's greatest monastery, and the remains of two towers and a monastery church survive. Uniquely, these two islands have kept their old Greek names in Turkish translation – Yassıada means Flat Island, Plati in Greek, and its neighbour Sivriada is the old Oxia, or Pointed Island.

Like Yassıada, Sivri-Oxia has its own

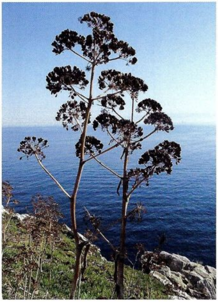
OWEN MATTHEWS

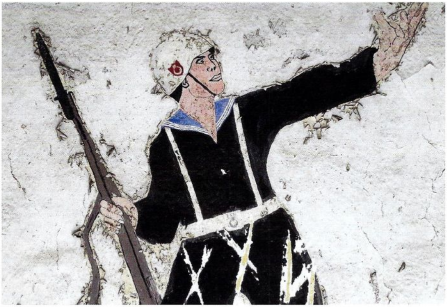
A view of the Princes Islands from one of Yassıada's modern ruins in 2012. From left: Burgaz, Heybeliada and Büyükada. Developers have since flattened most of Yassıada's buildings nasty historical secret – in 1909 the revolutionary Committee for Union and Progress ordered Istanbul's stray dogs to be rounded up and dumped on the uninhabited island. The memory of this evil act lives on. Istanbul's Animal Rights Society has commissioned a special plaque that was erected by the quay to commemorate the souls of the dead dogs.

The last flicker of human life on Yassıada came 20 or so years ago: in 1993 the navy handed the by-now-disused buildings over to Istanbul University. There was a brief attempt to create an oceanographic institute on Yassıada. But the strong north wind, which blows almost incessantly in summer, and the remoteness of the place made it unpopular with students. By the time I visited for the first time in 2002 Yassıada was comprehensively abandoned. For a couple of summers in the mid-2000s a group of Turkish naval commandos used the island for training, installing fierce-looking (but actually rather friendly) guard dogs. At about the same time a few giant nets for breeding captive sea bass appeared, moored near the port, and a pair of young chaps who maintained the fish farm used to warn away visitors with an apologetic shrug, pointing at the red warning signs installed by the navy. Visitors had to use the quay on the far side of the island and pretend not to be there, while the fish boys would pretend not to see you. Last year a diving school was set up that takes boatloads of scuba enthusiasts to dive in the clear waters off the island.

Today there are controversial plans afoot for reviving Yassıada. After a generation of silence and abandonment, life is set to return to the island. That's probably a good thing. Indeed, part of the frisson of today's Yassıada is the very strangeness and unnaturalness of its abandonment – ten hectares of memory-freighted wasteland in the heart of Europe's fastest-growing city.

Nonetheless, for entirely selfish reasons I will mourn the return of Yassıada to the currents of the world. Boat trips to this enchanted and sinister island, in the calm days of May or September, with Bosphorus porpoises splashing around our small wooden boat, have made some of the most unforgettable days of my children's childhood. Nowhere else could one find that eerie quality of silence amid a teeming city, the murmuring of ghosts and political passions still not laid to rest. ◆





Below left The naval barracks, a jungle of brambles and wild fig trees, in 2014. They have since been swept away
Below right The giant flower of the agave, which thrives on the island
Bottom A patriotic mural, memento of the island's naval days. Above the soldier are the words 'Önce Vatan', or Country First

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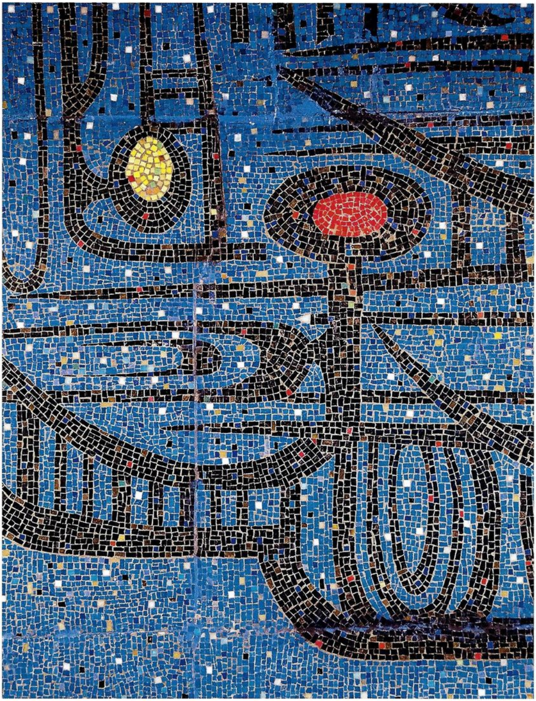

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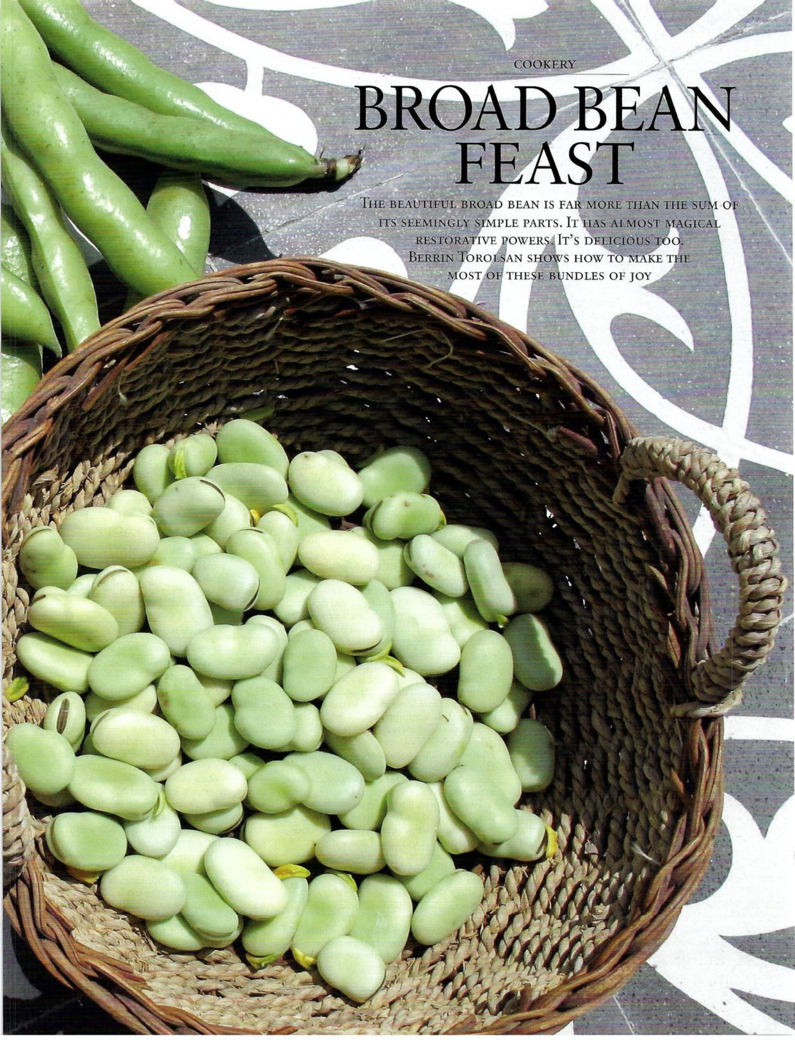
Spring green: broad beans and their brilliant green pods are one of the Old World's oldest cultivated vegetables

BERRIN TOROLSAN

BROAD BEAN FEAST

The beautiful broad bean is far more than the sum of its seemingly simple parts. It has almost magical restorative powers. It's delicious too. Berrin Torolsan shows how to make the most of these bundles of joy



Besides being quite delicious, the simple broad bean is nothing short of a little bundle of magic. Rich in minerals and vitamins, it contains the chemical L-dopa, which feeds dopamine and adrenaline to the brain and body. This in turn stimulates motor functions, improves energy levels, supports the immune system, increases the libido and even rejuvenates cells. As well as having all these wonderful effects, it is an excellent source of non-animal protein.

Packed with nutrients, broad beans, like other legumes such as peas, chickpeas and lentils, seem to have been on mankind's menu since the beginning. A handful of broad-bean seeds unearthed by Japanese archaeologists at Tell el-Kerkh in northern Syria, contemporary with the nearby and better-known Neolithic site of Göbekli Tepe in southeast Turkey, show that the use and cultivation of pulses took place much earlier than previously supposed. They are still intact and have been carbon-dated to the 10th millennium BC – the earliest archaeobotanical finds of broad beans.

Broad beans, or fava beans (*Vicia faba*), seem to have spread rapidly into post-glacial Europe and were one of the continent's most important staples. In 10th-century Cordoba, Arib ibn Said writes lovingly in his agricultural calendar, *Kitāb al-anwā,* of "… the month of March, when the early roses and lilies begin to bloom and in the vegetable gardens broad beans take shape. Quails suddenly make their appearance; the silkworm hatches out…".

Broad-bean gardens are a delightful sight, and their vibrant tall green plants with scented black-freckled white blossoms are popular with bees, which help in pollination although the plant is self-fertilising. A hardy annual, it grows effortlessly in a wide range of soils, and is one of the few legumes that can be planted in late autumn, when it grows slowly, surviving the harsh winter months to be harvested in spring. In the fields it is sown after cereals are harvested to enrich the soil's nutrients by helping to fix nitrogen. Broad beans can be dried and stored for many years and still germinate happily when sown.

The varieties cultivated as a vegetable in Turkey generally have long pods of six to eight seeds. The tender seed pods are often collected in the early days of spring, before the seeds have fully developed, to be cooked as a vegetable, like French beans. As well as vitamin B, fresh green broad beans contain an added bonus of vitamins A and C, which are unrivalled in reviving the system at the end of winter. Market stalls are piled with the green, velvety pods, which after the long winter are very popular with Istanbullus, who ignore the high price – almost every shopping basket seems to have a handful, along with a bunch of dill. While the Sakız and Bayrampaşa varieties used to be the most sought-after fresh cultivars, today the cross of local varieties with each other and with imported seeds has left us with just the one type, albeit tasty and delicious.

The Roman gourmet Apicius in the first century gives a recipe for *Fabaceae virides*, green beans, in his *De re coquinaria.* Cooked in olive oil, they are served with chopped leeks. He also lists a *concicla*, a mash of dried broad beans cooked with olive oil, seasoned with spices, wine and the fermented fish sauce garum.

To preserve broad beans as a winter legume, the pods are left to ripen on the plant. They are shelled, the leathery skin is removed and the kernel is split in two, then left to dry in the sun. Until the late 16th and early 17th centuries, when numerous bean species, such as haricot and kidney beans, were introduced from the New World, the Old World was dependent on the broad bean both as a staple and as essential fodder. Even today broad-bean flour is included in animal feed – for cattle, sheep, poultry, rabbits and even fish. In the countryside *bakla*, the Turkish for broad bean, is commonly used to describe all beans. The word is deeply rooted in Turkish idioms. The patches on dappled grey horses resemble the shape of broad beans, so they are *bakla kırı*. Tiny houses are called *nohut oda bakla sofa* – chickpea room, broad-bean hall, akin to the Scots "but and ben".

In his dietary manual, the scientist Mahmût Şirvanî, physician to Mehmed the Conqueror's father, Murad II (1421–51), includes recipes for both fresh and dried broad beans. Among them are a broad-bean pickle made with mature fresh beans and vinegar, and a meat stew – *taze bakla kalyesi* – containing tender fresh beans, which was described as good for "softening the character". Another recipe is for a spicy mutton stew with dried split beans, served with sumac and lemon juice to cut the rich sauce, a dish recommended for both a clear complexion and increased potency.

In his book *Müntahab-ı Şifâ* (*A Guide to Health*) Şirvani's contemporary, Celâlüddin Hızır from Birgi, another physician, gives numerous remedies for a variety of illnesses made with wild or cultivated broad beans.

Two centuries later, a physician from Central Asia, the scholar Bahadur Khan, Sultan of Bukhara, compiled a voluminous pharmacopoeia in Persian and wrote a medical treatise in Turkic Chagatai, *Tabiblik Kitabı* (*A Book of Medicine*). He prescribes broad-bean tea for chronic coughs: "*baquillà beş batman çah suyi bila gaynagay…*" – "Boil broad beans in five measures of water to make a tea…"

The Topkapı's palace kitchens would have green broad beans in their tender pods delivered in spring from the extensive imperial gardens, huge enterprises that supplied the palace with fresh vegetables, fruit and cut flowers and sold the surplus in the markets as a cash crop. The consumption of fresh broad beans (*bakla-i taze*) by the imperial family increased from half a ton in the 15th century to nearly two tons in the 17th, as the population of the royal household increased. Dried legumes such as chickpeas, peas, lentils, beans and broad beans, all classified as *bakliyat* (kinds of broad bean), used to be supplied by the buyers, who every year would choose the best crops from different Anatolian farmers.

Today both fresh and dried broad beans are still very much part of the Turkish diet, enjoyed for their deliciousness and believed to have restorative qualities. Rich in fibre, vitamins, potassium and iron, the beans are also extremely popular with the health-conscious and, thanks to their L-dopa content, are recommended as an alternative to energy-, mood- and motivation-boosting drugs. Bean extracts are even marketed as a natural aphrodisiac.

So, when you are feeling a little low or tired, why not follow the example of our Neolithic ancestors? You might just find that a bowl of broad beans brightens your day.

KURU BAKLA ÇORBASI
BROAD BEAN SOUP

Handful of dried broad beans

1 medium carrot, chopped

1 onion, quartered

1 or 2 garlic cloves, peeled

1 bay leaf

Pinch paprika flakes

1 glass chicken or veal stock

1 tablespoon butter

This adapted recipe from Rumelia (the Ottoman Balkans) is taken from a cookbook, *Yemek Kitabı*, published in Turkish in Bulgaria in 1965. The writers point out that this soup can be also prepared with dried peas or chickpeas.

1 Soak the broad beans overnight. Drain, rinse and place in a deep pan. Add the carrot, the onion, garlic and bay leaf. Season with salt, sugar and paprika flakes, add water to cover and bring to the boil. Simmer until the vegetables and broad beans are mushy.

2 Remove the bay leaf. Press the contents through a sieve or whizz in a blender or food processor and pour into another pan. Dilute the purée with the stock or some warm water to form a soup (the book says it should be quite thick) and bring to the boil again. Taste for seasoning.

3 Add the butter and serve, boiling hot, preferably with crunchy croutons.

Taze Bakla Bastisi
Stew of Green Broad Beans

500g tender green pods
Olive oil or butter
500g mutton, cubed
1 teaspoon tomato paste
1 medium onion, chopped
Salt and sugar

This fresh green broad-bean stew, a spring classic, is in Şirvani's 15th-century cookery book, and reappears in Ayşe Fahriye Hanım's 1882 *Ev Kadını* (*The Housewife*) – she suggests rubbing the bean pods with a little lemon and salt, and not taking the lid off the pan during cooking, as oxidisation discolours the beans. Modern broad bean varieties keep their emerald colour.

1 Top and tail and and halve the pods. Rinse and drain in a colander.

2 Heat a little olive oil or butter in a pan, and stir-fry the meat until brown on all sides. Add the tomato paste and a little hot water and simmer, covered, until the meat is tender.

3 Add the broad beans and onions to the pan, and season with salt and sugar. Add hot water sparingly, if needed, and simmer for 10–15 minutes, until the beans are tender.

4 Serve hot with fresh bread to mop up the delicious sauce. It is very good with yoghurt.

Fava
Purée of Dried Broad Beans

250g dried broad beans
2 onions, quartered
3 or 4 cloves of garlic, peeled
4 tablespoons olive oil
Salt and sugar
Fresh or dried mint

The author Burhan Oğuz, in his book *Cultural Origins of the Turkish People*, tells us in the chapter on broad beans that mashed broad beans cooked in olive oil are known in Istanbul as *fava*. And so they are, but why an Italian name? Broad-bean purée has been around, virtually unchanged, since Apicius's day in the first century, resurfacing as a mash of "*kuru bakla*" – dried broad beans – in two 19th-century cookery books, Ayşe Fahriye Hanım's *Ev Kadını* and Mahmut Nedim bin Tosun's *Aşçıbaşı* (*The Chef*). In Istanbul dried split broad beans are sold with the chewy inner skin removed.

1 Soak the beans overnight in a bowl with water to cover.

2 Drain and put them in a pan (preferably a pressure cooker, which saves time), add the onions, garlic, olive oil, salt and sugar. Cover with water and bring to the boil, then reduce the heat and simmer until the beans are disintegrating. This takes about 20 minutes in a pressure cooker.

3 In a blender or food processor, whizz the contents of the pan, including the cooking liquid, to a purée. Pour while still hot into a shallow dish and leave to cool and set.

4 When cold, drizzle a little extra olive oil over the top, sprinkle with the mint and serve cut into slices or squares (as above). This makes an excellent meze or first course, and a squeeze of lemon can give it extra edge.

FAVA, A SILKY BROAD-BEAN DELICACY THAT MARRIES PERFECTLY WITH REFRESHING MINT

Zeytinyağli Taze Bakla
Green Broad-Bean Pods Cooked in Olive Oil

500g tender green pods
5 tablespoons olive oil
1 large onion, chopped
Salt
1 teaspoon sugar
1 teaspoon flour
Fresh dill to decorate

This is a treat to celebrate the arrival of spring. Young broad-bean pods are picked before the seeds ripen and are cooked as a vegetable, like French beans. The delicate, slightly tangy flavour of the beans combines wonderfully with the dill, the olive oil and the creaminess of the yoghurt. Flour is optional but helps to thicken the sauce and makes the beans look a brighter green.

1 Trim the ends of the pods, halve the tall ones, rinse and leave to drain in a colander.

2 Heat the olive oil and sauté the onion until it softens, add the beans and stir-fry.

3 Dilute the flour in half a glass of cold water. Add salt and sugar, stir with a spoon until dissolved, and add the mixture to the pan. Cover and cook for about 20 minutes, until the beans are soft but still firm.

4 Serve cold with a generous sprinkling of chopped dill and a bowl of natural yogurt as an accompaniment.

Baklali Enginar
Artichoke Hearts with Broad Beans

4 globe artichoke hearts
1 lemon
1 large onion
500g mature fresh broad beans
4 tablespoons olive oil
Salt and sugar
Fresh dill to decorate
Lemon wedges for serving

In the second half of the 12th century the gentleman farmer Ibn al-Awam from Moorish Spain tells us in his *Book of Agriculture* that in Seville broad beans and artichokes are ready for eating in April. It is also common to see them together on market stalls in Istanbul in late spring. By then the broad beans are mature, and the large, ripe seeds need to be taken out of their pods, which at this stage are too tough to be edible. Very mature beans can also have tough skins, so slit them with a knife and pop out the green kernels.

This recipe is for beans with their skins. Skinned beans take less time to cook and should be put into the pan at the same time as the artichokes. (Artichoke hearts are sold in Turkey cleaned of their bracts, ready for cooking.)

1 Rinse the artichoke hearts, rub each one with a lemon half dipped in salt to stop discoloration, and set aside.

2 Remove the broad-bean pods.

3 Chop the onion finely.

4 In a shallow pan heat the olive oil, sauté the onion until soft, add the broad beans and half a glass of water and bring to the boil. Cover and cook for about 10 minutes.

5 Lastly, add the artichokes and season with salt and sugar, then add the juice of half a lemon with some more water and simmer until the artichoke hearts are cooked.

6 Leave to cool, covered. Arrange the artichoke hearts hollow-side up, like little bowls, on a shallow serving dish. Spoon the beans into the hearts, drizzle with a little more olive oil and decorate with chopped dill. Serve cold with lemon wedges. ◆

Berrin Torolsan, bt@cornucopia.net.
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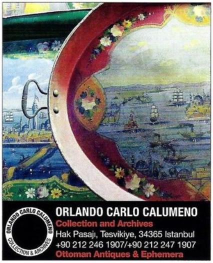

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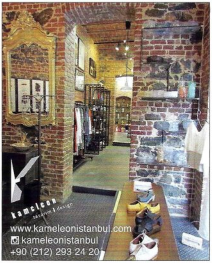

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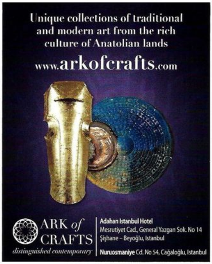

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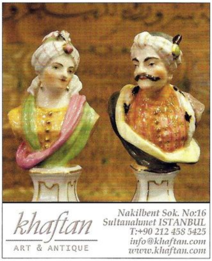

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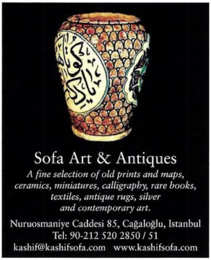

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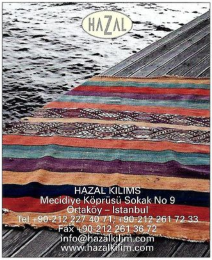

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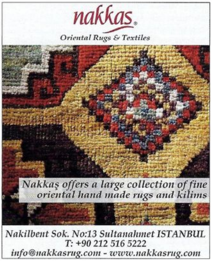

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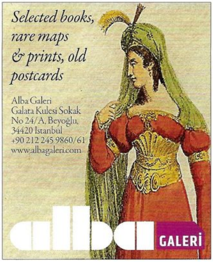
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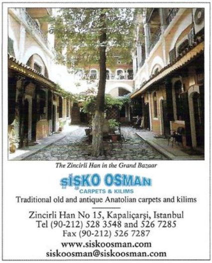
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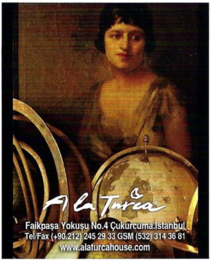
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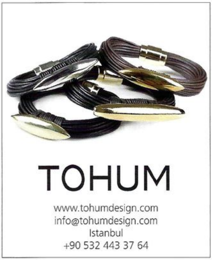
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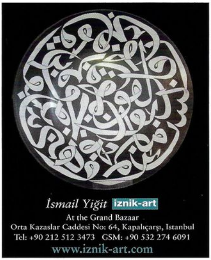
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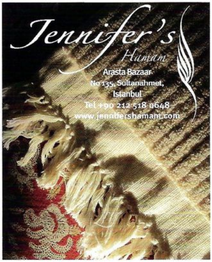
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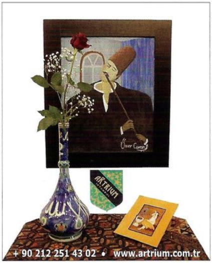
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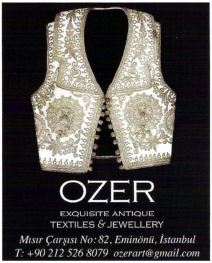
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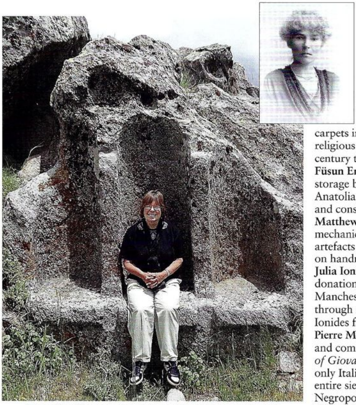
John Carswell introduces the wide-ranging entries in this year's Ancient and Modern Prize for original research. The competition was so hot that the vote had to go to a recount

A demographic analysis of the 15 applications this year (14 fewer than the record 29 last year), produced some interesting results. There were 10 from the older group (over 60), and only five from the younger (under 26), and the two winners were from the former group. Of the young, two were from the UK and three from the USA; of the older group, three were from the USA, four from the UK, one from Germany and two from Turkey. The eventual winner was Pat Yale, a British journalist and historian who has lived for 14 years in a cave-house in Cappadocia and writes a regular blog on her website, turkeyfromtheinside.com.

Pat Yale is writing a book following in the footsteps of the peripatetic Gertrude Bell (1868–1926) through Anatolia, basing her route on Bell's diaries, and her proposal was for funds to assist in the travel involved.

"Bell is best known for the role she played in the post-war creation of modern Syria and Iraq," Yale says. "But throughout her youth she made many visits to Turkey that took her all over the country, often to places that rarely see a foreign visitor even today. She carried out extensive studies of the Byzantine churches of the Binbirkilise and Tur Abdin regions but also found time to climb Mts Hasan and Cudi, float down the Tigris on a raft of inflated goatskins and fall in love with the married British consul in Konya."

Yale is photographed above at Binbirkilise (Thousand and One Churches), "an archaeological site more or less forgotten by time. Few tourists visit the nearby town of Karaman, despite its fine medieval mosques and medreses. Fewer still make it up into the surrounding Karadağ Mountains to explore the remains of a group of Byzantine churches about which Gertrude Bell wrote a book with Professor William Ramsay in 1907." Bell camped on the mountainside for six weeks, measuring and photographing the ruins. "It's a wonderfully romantic spot, which visitors often share only with sheep and tortoises."



GERTRUDE BELL ARCHIVE, NEWCASTLE UNIVERSITY

ABOVE PAT YALE AT ONE OF THE BİNBİRKİLİSE CHURCHES (THOUSAND AND ONE CHURCHES) IN CENTRAL ANATOLIA
TOP RIGHT THE INTREPID GERTRUDE BELL SPENT SIX WEEKS ON THE MOUNTAINSIDE IN 1907

THE WINNERS

Pat Yale, 60 receives the first prize of £1000 for a three-month project retracing the pre-First World War travels around Turkey of the British explorer and archaeologist Gertrude Bell, using her diaries as a route planner.

Dr Steven Cohen, 66 wins the Godfrey Goodwin Prize worth £500. He proposes to produce the first fully illustrated survey of all carpets known to have been, or strongly suspected once to have been, part of the historic carpet collection of the Maharajas of Amber/Jaipur in Northern India.

HONOURABLE MENTIONS

Nick Allen, 63 Commemorative plates featuring the Turkish flag from the mid-19th century to the present day.

Massoumeh (Nahid) Assemi, 66 The Tekkiye Mu'aven ul-Mulk, a religious building dedicated to the performance of *tazieh*, a theatrical ritual dealing with the commemoration of the Battle of Karbala.

Joyce Corbett, 60 The Ottoman influence on Hungarian Renaissance textiles.

Elisa Grilli di Cortona, 26 The depiction of Anatolian "animal" carpets in Florentine and Sienese religious paintings from the 13th century to the end of the 15th.

Füsun Ertuğ, 63 Square, box-like storage baskets in use in eastern Anatolia, their history, materials and construction.

Matthew Elliott Gillman, 24 The mechanical reproduction of Islamic artefacts in the West and its effect on handmade crafts in the East.

Julia Ionides, 73 Textile trading and donations in Constantinople, Manchester, London and Athens, through research on the Greek Ionides family.

Pierre MacKay, 81 Publication of and commentary on the *Account of Giovan-Maria Angiolello*, the only Italian eyewitness to the entire siege and storming of Negroponte in 1470.

Gérard J Maizou, 66, and Dr Katharina Müller, 63 Turkish *oya* (decorative lace edging) from folk art to modern design.

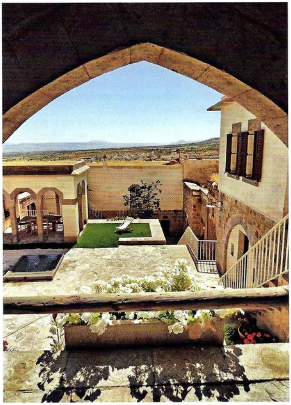
Viviana Delgado Méndez, 24 Creation of a virtual copy of the Praxiteles Aphrodite for the Louvre, proving that the Baroque sculptor François Girardon altered the Aphrodite unearthed in Arles in the 17th century.

Walter Meyer, 63 A history of Turkish street art, both graffiti and figurative.

Simon T Parsons, 25 The Siege of Nicaea in the 13th-century *Hatton 77 Manuscript* in the Bodleian Library, Oxford.

August Siena Thomas, 24 Following in the footsteps of Lady Mary Wortley Montagu from Vienna to Istanbul, on the 300th anniversary of her journey. ◆

The Ancient and Modern Prize is sponsored by CORNUCOPIA *and* HALI *magazines, with contributions from Bonhams, Christie's and Sotheby's. Applicants must be under 26 or over 60. Apply at ancientandmodern.co.uk. For details of future prizes, contact the prize secretary, Julie Witford, secretary@ancientandmodern.co.uk*



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Village Voices

After a wet and stormy summer, the Iznik olive harvest plummeted last winter and Azize Ethem's neighbours fear for the future of a life on the land. On a cheerier note, there are visits from old friends and stories with happy endings

Winter arrived early last year, with local folklore dictating a harsh one. A large pile of logs was stacked outside the kitchen door, and candles and torches made ready for the inevitable power cuts. The jackals came down from the hills and for the first time ever I heard their blood-curdling calls in the night.

Here on the edge of the lake I'd had an enjoyable summer, with interesting guests and no great dramas. Well, the malfunction of my 400-metre underground electric cable caused a bit of a palaver, with no electricity for a week. A bevy of village men arrived each day to gossip, drink tea and advise the electrician on which spot to dig for it. Luckily, my friend John arrived to stay and soon had things organised. A contraption that filled the back of a medium-sized truck was dispatched from Bursa, and within a minute of playing with a few wires the operator declared the break was 1.68 metres from the pylon. None of the assembled experts believed a word of it, but unbelievably it was exactly where predicted. The joy of having electricity again overcame any ill feelings towards the electrician for not bringing this black magic in seven days earlier.

A ferocious hailstorm followed by dramatic thunderstorms hit while the olive trees were in flower. No pollen equals no olives, and the crop for the whole area was only 25 per cent of the average yield. Driving down the lane through the olive groves, the trees were barren. There was no work for the itinerant farmhands. Bank loans had to be reassessed and shop owners looked worried. No wonder young country folk are rejecting life on the land.

The previous winter every road in Iznik had been dug up for the laying of sewage pipes, and the trenches were only roughly filled in, making driving a nightmare. Unbelievably, every ditch is now to be reopened for the placing of natural gas pipes. So we are in for a second winter of trench-leaping, mud and impassable roads.

Back in September, with the Kurban Bayramı festival days away, it was time to dig out the best cups and saucers and bake biscuits in readiness for visitors. I never know who will come, but the most welcome guests are Rıza and his family, who make the trip from Iznik each year.

Fifteen years ago, when we started renovating our house and barns in Iznik, Rıza was one of the labourers employed by the builder. A short, thin man in his early thirties, he was impressively strong, attacking every chore with gusto. The first stumbling block with the builder was a request that Simba the dog be tied up all day. He explained that Rıza was a Şafi Muslim who would have to undergo a lengthy cleansing ritual if touched by a dog. My husband, Selim, refused, suggesting he simply keep his distance. It worked, and Rıza was soon playing with our great hairy beast without the pair ever touching.

We got to know Rıza and his sister, Şadiye, who came to help me set up home amid the dust and rubble. Their parents had fled the strife-torn village in the southeast where they had lived for generations. Rıza, his wife and six children had followed, now living in a one-room basement with an outside tap and lavatory. Each morning a child would be sent to the bakery to buy 15 loaves of yesterday's bread, which formed the bulk of their diet.

Restorations complete, Rıza stayed to help me build a garden and tackle chores. Şadiye quietly kept the rambling house in order, revelling in her newfound skills with such exotic gadgets as a vacuum cleaner and washing machine. Charity was not an option, but there were ways to circumvent their pride. A huge vegetable garden produced far too much for us and they happily took the surplus. Selim bought Rıza a motor scooter so he could run errands for us – not that we had any. The family moved into a small apartment with the luxury of indoor plumbing.

After many years it was time for Rıza to move on. He floated from job to job, eventually landing work with an elderly roofing contractor. Rıza proved a boon to the business and was made a partner. When the old man retired, he handed it over to Rıza lock, stock and barrel.

On the day of the festival they arrived – Rıza driving a spotless, gleaming vehicle, his proud wife beside him. The daughters were decked out in lovely glittery dresses, while the boys sported top-brand trainers. Stale bread no longer features in their diet.

But when Rıza announced an arranged marriage had been organised for Şadiye, I was distraught. I held forth on the injustice of marrying her off to a second cousin she hadn't seen since she was four. She would be doomed to a life of drudgery in a horrid little village hundreds of miles away. Selim quietly told me this was these people's tradition and there was nothing I could do. To temper my distress, Selim met the groom and his father on their arrival in Iznik. He stressed what a special young lady Şadiye was and how he expected her to be cared for properly.

A religious wedding took place that day, with no frothy white dress or guests, and Şadiye, her groom and father-in-law boarded a bus for southeastern Turkey.

A few days later she phoned. The day after her arrival she'd had a real wedding, arranged by her mother-in-law: a civil ceremony with guests, music, cake and all the trimmings. The most wonderful wedding dress in the world had been chosen for her – with chiffon, lace, frills and sequins. Even more amazing, Şadiye, a girl who had never had her own bedroom, was now mistress of a whole apartment. ◆

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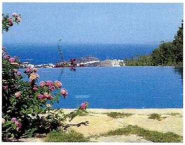

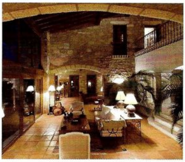

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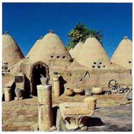

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Compliments to the chefs

Andrew Finkel waxes lyrical about two of his favourite fine-dining experiences

Guessing who's coming to dinner is no mystery to one of those vast and extremely swish Istanbul restaurants which (so I discovered) keeps a running tab on the percentages of foreign versus local clientele. How they do so I have no idea, as I have never been asked to produce a passport. But *why* they do so is obvious, since those who come to Istanbul to visit and those already here bring to the table such different expectations. The first come to experience something they cannot get at home – a specifically Turkish evening out. The couple at the next-door table are also in search of something new and entertaining, but their home is just around the corner, not in London or New York.

This dichotomy, as attentive readers might have observed, is the fault line that has run through this column all these years. What does one look for in an Istanbul evening out: authenticity or creativity? Should one quest for the most succulent kebab or one that is cleverly deconstructed? Is cooking a craft (doing something better than anyone else) or a display of virtuosity that earns you a weekly television slot and your own-brand kitchen equipment?

This is all by way explanation of my respect for Kemal Demirasal, a chef who lives and breathes my dilemma. I have eaten the tasting menu in **Alancha**, the gastronomic citadel in the Aegean resort of Alaçatı. And now he has set up shop in Teşvikiye, in the hard-core urban fabric of Istanbul. This new Alancha is more than worth the detour. The food Demirasal produces is original, beautiful to look at and deeply flavourful. It is not something you could try at home without a high-tech lab and a squad of sous chefs. At the same time, it is grounded in ingredients, tradition and techniques that are so obviously Turkish. This is food that is the result of both skill and intelligence. Alancha, I suspect, will come to be regarded as a landmark restaurant, with both Demirasal and those apprenticed in his kitchen leaving their imprint on Istanbul fine dining for a while to come.

I will cut to the chase and describe the most wonderful sweetbread I have ever had: almost crispy on the surface and like a molten croquette inside, and served with a caramelised onion and sweet onion cream. However, it is the starters where Demirasal shows his hand, many of them variations on Turkish street food. Under ordinary circumstances I would find it embarrassing to wax lyrical about hummus, but here the chickpea is a velvety vehicle for a host of striking flavours from sour cherry to unripe, bright-green "birdshit" pistachios, with texture provided by *katmer* – a crispy sort of *millefeuille* bread. The *balık ekmek* (the fish and bread you might get on Galata wharf) is as carefully prepared as the most elaborate sushi, and *çiğ köfte* is a lemony steak tartare with a small glass beaker of pickle juice on the side. The mains dishes are equally good, elaborate in their array of tastes and textures while still respecting the integrity of the main ingredient. Demirasal knows when to show off, but also when to be simple and let the taste of a piece of turbot on the bone shine through.

If there is a fault, it is that Alancha does not quite trust that its clientele are there for the food. This is no paranoid delusion. Istanbul diners are notorious for rewarding novelty ahead of excellence. The downstairs dining room, called Beets, is as much a club room, with vegetation climbing to the high ceilings giving it a tropical feel. The tables and chairs are high (as is the volume of the music), which somehow leaves you unprepared for the feast to follow. There is an array of exotic cocktails that bubble with dry ice or exude cedarwood smoke. I readily confess that I don't understand cocktails, but I did enjoy the pisco sour, despite its sporting (instead of a paper umbrella) a bunch of glazed grapes the size of an ascot hat.

Upstairs is a large inner sanctum – a quieter room where diners sit around bare walnut tables in pools of light. You can order à la carte here as well, but this is where the umpteen-course tasting menu is served – a very controlled ritual in the Danish Noma tradition. On the night I indulged, it began with a broth of fermented mushroom, an elegant mussel in tarragon oil and popped rice, wound its way through a savoury fresh nut crème, pulled lamb cheeks in brain sauce, all the way to a *kerepiç* (soapwort root) marshmallow frozen in liquid nitrogen. From the dish of smoked and sprouted legumes served in a carved-ice bowl to the slow-braised lamb with caramelised yoghurt on a marbled porcelain slab, everything was elegantly presented. And no one leaves the tasting menu hungry – but the curious thing is that you don't feel stuffed.

Understanding satiety is a little-appreciated virtue, but it is in evidence at one of my favourite Istanbul restaurants. On the surface, **Ahırkapı Balıkçısı** (The Ahırkapı Fisherman) is as different from Alancha as could be. It is little more than a hole in the wall. A portion of its customers are simply passing tourists, probably unaware of just how lucky they are to have wandered into a back alley, on the wrong side of the train tracks, down the hill from the carpet shops behind the Blue Mosque.

There are so few tables that I always swore I would never review it in public, but word has seeped out through myriad popular guides to the city, including *The Guardian's*. This is not exactly street food, but in good weather the restaurant spills out into the pavement. And it is loyal to the best of the uncluttered street-food tradition of doing one or two things really well – in this case a limited choice of meze and simply-cooked fish. Uğur Bircan, the gravel-voiced proprietor, guides you through what you should and should not eat. Unlike many an Istanbul restaurant where shrimps taste of soap, a clay tile of prawns cooked in butter, chunks of garlic and red pepper flakes tastes like shrimp. Grilled sea bass or swordfish shish retain a moist springy texture. For dessert (if there is room on the grill) there is sesame helva melted in a tinfoil package on a nest of grated carrot, which may sound odd but is astonishingly gratifying. If no one dish is overwhelming, the whole is so much more than the sum of its parts.

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The charm of the Princes Islands, with their horse-drawn carriages and Palladian-fronted wood houses, is that they give a hint of what Istanbul used to be like. So it is only reasonable that mealtimes should provide opportunities to experience what Istanbul used to eat.

There are plenty of Southend-on-Sea-style eateries serving contemporary junk food, but the islands are populated not just by day-trippers but summer residents, who are choosy

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The American Turkish Society

Founded in 1949, and based in New York, this valuable not-for-profit organisation seeks to enhance economic, political and cultural ties between the USA and Turkey. The Society further supports Turkish arts and culture through its Moon and Stars Project. info@americanturkishsociety.org
www.americanturkishsociety.org

Moon and Stars Project

The **Moon and Stars Project** highlights the best of Turkish arts and culture in the USA supporting film, the visual arts, photography, education and music. **www.maspny.org**
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about where they eat. Many head for **Milto**, one of the fish-and-meze restaurants along Büyükada's seafront promenade with professional service.

The **Anatolian Club** (which began life in 1908 as the Prinkipo Yacht Club, see p81) is one of the island's more genteel establishments (MPs have free membership), albeit in a frumpy sort of way. One way to gain access is to make a reservation at **Lavie Café**, an outdoor terrace restaurant with a set menu which includes yesteryear's croquette potatoes and tasty batter-fried slices of courgette. It is a good place to watch the sunset, listening to *vieilles tubes* (French "oldies but goldies").

The terrace of the stately **Splendid Hotel** is a fine place to watch the world go by and imagine yourself an extra in a Turkish remake of *Death in Venice*. The food is more Turkish standard dishes than international hotel fare – or simply have a coffee.

Another of Büyükada's pleasures is the trek up to St George's (Aya Yorgi) monastery. The reward, apart from the panoramic view, is the humble terrace restaurant and café with the very grand name of **Yücetepe Kır Gazinosu** (Yücetepe Countryside Resort). It serves, among other things, meatballs, beer and chips – and, depending on your luck (and what you regard as good luck or bad) there might still be some fruity plonk from the vineyards of another monastic island: Gökçeada.

Burgaz islanders walk or take a carriage for an evening out to **Kalpazankaya** for the variety of meze, fish and grilled meats. The food is more than just decent and the views serene. ◆

Milto *Gülistan Cad 16, Büyükada +90 216 382 5312 miltorestaurant.com*
Splendid Palas *23 (Yirmiüç) Nisan Cad No 23, Büyükada; +90 216 382 6950; splendidhotel.net*
Lavie Café *Anadolu Kulübü, 23 Nisan Cad, Büyükada +90 216 382 4444; laviecafe.com*
Yücetepe Kır Gazinosu *Aya Yorgi Manastırı, Büyükada +90 216 382 1333*
Kalpazankaya *Kalpazankaya Mevkii, Burgazada, +90 216 381 1111; kalpazankaya.com.tr*

CORNUCOPIA'S RESTAURANT DIRECTORY

Listed online at www.cornucopia.net

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Çırağan Cad No 28, Beşiktaş, Istanbul
+90-212 381 4059 www.fourseasons.com/bosphorus

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Four Seasons Hotel Istanbul at Sultanahmet
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Swissôtel Grand Efes, Izmir
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LES AMBASSADEURS – BEBEK, ISTANBUL

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Bebek Hotel, Cevdet Paşa Cad 34, Bebek, Istanbul
+90-212 358 1565 www.bebekhotel.com.tr

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Akkavak Sok 30, Nişantaşı, Istanbul
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Ahmet Saygun Cad, Ulus Park No 1, Ulus, Istanbul
+90-212 358 2929 www.ulus29.com

CHALET RESTAURANT – MAÇKA, ISTANBUL

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Swissôtel The Bosphorus Istanbul, Maçka, Istanbul
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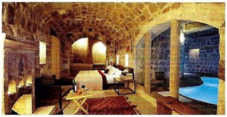
THE TURKISH COAST AND CAPPADOCIA



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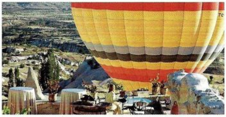

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LETTER FROM ANATOLIA

The people's poet

The popular appeal of Yunus Emre, 13th-century poet, storyteller and Sufi mystic, still extends from Azerbaijan to the Balkans, while in Turkey his portrait graces the 200-lira note. Roger Norman looks at the life of a man from a humble Anatolian village whose wit, wisdom and humanity live on

A few years back, when I lived in Eskişehir city centre, I would often almost salute Yunus Emre. There was an appealingly unmonumental statue of the poet not far from our door to which I would raise my hand or nod my head as I passed. I knew little of him apart from a few verses, including one with the refrain, touching enough to any exile, "a stranger so forlorn as I". The last verse runs:

Yunus gets no help or pity
No cure for his calamity
Drifting from city to city –
A stranger so forlorn as I.

Probably because of the diminutive statue, I got it into my head that he had been a small guy, though perhaps this was also due to the modesty of his character conveyed in his poems – the opposite of an aggressive crusader.

I am not here on earth for strife
Love is the mission of my life.

Since we are all actually nothing
What are all of Solomon's riches?

The Lords are wild with wealth and might.
They ignore the people's plight
Immersed in selfhood which is blight...

One said: I wish I could see this Yunus.
I've seen him, the other says. He's just
another old lover.

Today's humanists like to link Yunus Emre with Dante, Petrarch or Erasmus, on the basis (one supposes) of such comments on the quest for God as "I looked and looked but failed to find / I found him inside man at last," and "See for yourself: God is man, that's what he is." Certainly he was no respecter of the forms of religion, nor did any exclusive claim to righteousness impress him. "We regard no man's religion as contrary to ours / True love is born when all faiths are united as one."

For me the comparison with the medieval and Renaissance humanists misses the mark. He seems closer to Rumi than to Erasmus, and closer to Chaucer than to Dante. Rumi (born 1207) was a contemporary, and since they lived in broadly the same neck of the woods it's quite likely, as the stories relate, that they met. Yunus was born in Karaman or Bolu or Eskişehir – somewhere in central Anatolia, at any rate – and Rumi lived for many years in the Seljuk capital of Konya. They were both travellers, poets and mystics; perhaps they even shared a sense of humour. Here is the record of one conversation:

"What is your opinion of my *Mathnawi*?" Rumi asks.

"Not bad, but I would have done it differently," says Yunus.

"How so?" says the master.

"I would have said," Yunus replies, "I took shape as flesh and bone / And here I am as Yunus."

At 26,000 verses, Rumi's *Mathnawi* is longer than the *Odyssey* and *Iliad* combined, and Rumi might have found this an impertinent comment, but apparently didn't. Another story has Mevlânâ ("the Master") saying: "Wherever I go, I find this Türkmen poet has preceded me... I cannot surpass him."

The language of Rumi's poetry was Persian, the style and structure obeying the rules of the Arab–Persian literary tradition. He was an educated man, his milieu the medrese, the Sufi lodge, the company of the learned. Yunus by all accounts was a self-taught Anatolian villager. When we first meet him in the stories he arrives at the lodge of Hacı Bektaş Veli, bringing with him a basket of wild pears, trying to exchange them for a bag of seeds to take back to his village, to save it from famine. "I'll give you a blessing [or "holy breath"] instead," says Hacı Bektaş. But no, it's seeds that Yunus is after. "I'll give you ten blessings for each pear," the Hacı offers. Thanks, but no. So Yunus is given a large sack of seeds, and only on his way home, reflecting on the Hacı's generosity, does he feel that he may have missed an opportunity. He turns back, but it's too late because Hacı Bektaş has already assigned him a teacher – Taptuk Emre. Yunus ends up serving Taptuk for 40 years, gathering fuelwood in the hills.

Each of these stories bears its Sufic explanation, naturally. The wild pears stand for native or intuitive knowledge, to be exchanged for the seeds of genuine wisdom. Yet despite the clear links with the Bektaşi order, Yunus always seems to stand apart in some way. As a poet his medium is the vernacular – the colloquial Anatolian Turkish of the time. The structure of the poems is very simple, based on the number of syllables and which ones are stressed. The rhythm is clear and strong, not only to the scholar or linguist. Take this short *tekerleme* (riddle): *Çıkdım erik dalına / Anda yedim üzümü / Bostan ıssı kakıyıp / Der ne yersin kozumu.* Translated in a correspondingly spare fashion, we get something to this effect: "I climbed a plum tree / and ate a grape. / 'After my walnuts, are you?' / called the gardener." Unravelled, the riddle suggests that the climber (or quester) thinks he's after one thing and finds something different, but the owner of the garden (*bostan ıssı*) knows that it's the nut or kernel that really matters. Imagery of fruit, seed, nut, branch, leaf is very common and not hard to interpret – although there are levels of complexity, as you would expect. The plum, for example, is a fruit of which only the outside flesh is eaten, while the kernel is left untouched...

Forty years of collecting wood for Taptuk Emre are made more laborious by Yunus's insistence that only straight wood is good enough for his teacher's hearth. Bent, crooked or damp wood is not to be allowed. The statue of Yunus Emre at the main entrance to Anadolu University, larger and more impressive than the one in the city centre, depicts Yunus shouldering his faggot of perfectly straight, evenly sized wood. The students walk past it every day, most of them no doubt oblivious to its significance. Foliage grows closely around and above the statue and many users of the gate may even be scarcely aware of the figure of "the old lover" observing them. I have not heard the insistence on straight wood interpreted. Perhaps the message is also straightforward: no degree of attentiveness is too much for the wise teacher... or something of the kind.

There's a hint of irony here. I don't mean regarding student-teacher relations in this age, but because Yunus Emre might not have been the greatest supporter of the current university system. "Too many words are a fitting load for an ass," he said. And elsewhere: "Poor Yunus, raw and tasteless, finally got cooked, glory be to God." One wonders just what role the university degree would have played in that development.

Still, there can be no real objection to the presence of Anatolia's greatest poet – as he is now widely called – at the entrance to a university. But can the same be said about another contemporary appearance of the great man – the place where he is spotted most frequently these days – on the reverse of the 200-lira banknote? For the people responsible for that astonishing decision, I offer a last comment from the poor man's poet:

Hypocrites claim they make no gain
Through any means which might be illicit
The truth of it is: they only refrain
When certain that they cannot grab it.

Roger Norman is a novelist and teacher living in Eskişehir; rnorman@anadolu.edu.tr

« CORNUCOPIA'S ISTANBUL HOTEL DIRECTORY cont.

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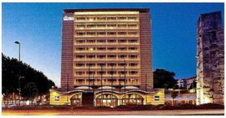

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TEL 90-212 293 9494 FAX 90-212 293 9474

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www.jumeirah.com
TEL 90-212 377 4000 FAX 90-212 377 4077

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www.ibrahimpasha.com contact@ibrahimpasha.com
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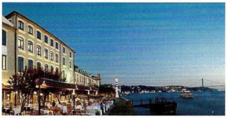


THE SUMAHAN ON THE WATER – ÇENGELKÖY

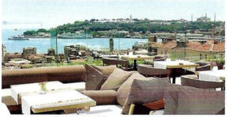
A launch whisks you across the water to Europe when you stay on the Asian shore at the Sumahan. An inspired conversion of an Ottoman distillery by husband-and-wife architects who inherited it, with wonderful views of the Old City. Çengelköy, a village that has kept its old Bosphorus charm, is a short stroll. The hotel has a hamam and shares the quay with the new Tapasuma Restaurant.

www.sumahan.com tuba.tekeli@sumahan.com
TEL 90-216 422 8000 FAX 90-216 422 8008

ARMADA PERA – BEYOĞLU

The Armada Hotel opened this equally successful boutique hotel the finely restored Parma Apartments, built for an Ottoman palace tailor. Admire the 360-degree view from the roof terrace, travel back in time for a taste of Art Nouveau style and traditional comfort as you explore today's Istanbul, and enjoy the truly 'tailor-made' hospitality.

www.armadapera.com info@armadapera.com
TEL 90-212 293 7373 FAX 90-212 293 7377



GEORGES HOTEL – GALATA

Georges is a new stylish 20-room boutique hotel housed in a heritage building in the heart of Istanbul's chic, trendy Beyoğlu with its shops, bars, art galleries and restaurants. Contemporary interiors are offset by a stately, old-world romance. Stunning balcony views of the Bosphorus and Golden Horn, in-room yoga service, conference room, French restaurant. Just a few steps from Galata Tower.

www.georges.com reservation@georges.com
TEL 90-212 244 2423 FAX 90-212 244 2413

EMPRESS ZOE – SULTANAHMET

Each room is airy and full of charm in this delightfully peaceful small family-run hotel, the perfect haven just a minute's walk from Ayasofya, the Blue Mosque, Topkapı Palace and the Arasta Bazaar. Breakfast is in a beautifully planted secret courtyard garden of cypress and palm trees next to the romantic ivy-clad ruins of a 16th-century domed hamam covered with wild delphiniums and snapdragons.

www.emzoe.com info@emzoe.com
TEL 90-212 518 2504 FAX 90-212 518 5699

GALATA ANTIQUE HOTEL – BEYOĞLU

Looking across to the Galata Tower on one side and the Golden Horn on the other, this hotel is in Beyoğlu's Tünel district, a lively bohemian quarter, and the ideal base for exploring Istanbul. The historic, sensitively restored winter mansion of a French Levantine family, built by the architect Alexandre Vallaury, retains its original Ottoman Neoclassical style, but with a modern-day twist.

www.galataantiquehotel.com
info@galataantiquehotel.com
TEL 90 212 245 5944 FAX 90 212 245 5947

GALATA ANTIQUE HOTEL

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